

Fall 8-15-2005

# ENG 5011-001: Genre Theory & Pedagogy

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## Recommended Citation

Binns, Donna, "ENG 5011-001: Genre Theory & Pedagogy" (2005). *Fall 2005*. 140.  
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## English 5011: Genre Theory & Pedagogy

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Instructor: Dr. Donna Binns  
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**Course Description:** The concept of genre has been redefined in the past twenty years. Genres are seen as rhetorical actions as opposed to formal categories. As a result, genres are viewed as socially significant ways that people use language to achieve their purposes. In this course, we will study recent genre theory and applications of that theory, particularly in relation to pedagogy. Some issues that we may discuss include the following:

- Who decides what constitutes a genre and what difference it makes
- The interactions between generic constraint and individual creativity
- The relationships between “literary” and “non-literary” genres
- How a genre can change over time in response to changing cultural contexts
- How genres operate in communities, reflecting the group’s values, beliefs, and assumptions
- How genre theory can be applied to teaching reading and writing
- Whether explicitly teaching genres helps or harms novice writers.

Class participants will also have the opportunity to study a genre of their choosing.

### Required Texts:

*Writing Genres* by Amy J. Devitt  
*Scenes of Writing* by Amy J. Devitt, Anis Bawarshi, and Mary Jo Reiff  
*Genre and the New Rhetoric* edited by Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway  
*Learning and Teaching Genre* edited by Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway  
*Genre in the Classroom* edited by Ann M. Johns

**Course Requirements:** In addition to coming prepared to class each week and participating in class discussions, the following work will be required.

1. **Daily Work:** In-class writings, response papers, WebCT responses, group work, informal presentations and peer response activities constitute potential daily work assignment. Generally, in-class activities cannot be made up at a later date.
2. **Genre Analysis:** This 6-8 page paper will involve producing a written analysis of a genre that you select.
3. **Genre Critique:** This 6-8 page paper will involve producing a written critique of the genre you selected for the genre analysis (unless you have made other arrangements with me).

4. **Journal Article:** This paper will constitute the final written assignment for the course. You will select an academic journal and write a substantial formal research paper that you could submit to that journal for publication. Naturally, your topic should relate to topics covered in the course, but the specific selection should be guided by your interests in genre theory and pedagogy. However, you will want the article be appropriate for the journal that you have selected.

5. **Journal Article Presentation:** This will be a short oral presentation (no more than ten minutes) of the main points covered in your journal article.

**Grading:** Detailed requirements for each major written project will be provided in assignment prompts. Due dates are listed on the course calendar. Penalties for excessive absences will be deducted as described in the “Attendance” section. Late work will be penalized as described in the “Late Work” section. Otherwise, your final course grade will be determined by the following:

Daily Work & Participation	20%
Genre Analysis	20%
Genre Critique	20%
Journal Article	30%
Journal Article Presentation	10%

**Late Work:** Late work that is not excused before its due date will be penalized by 10% of the maximum possible points for each day it is late (excluding weekend days). Hard copies only will be accepted. Assignments, including drafts, are due at the beginning of class. Work turned in after the beginning of class may be penalized by up to 10% of the maximum possible points. Computer and printer problems are not an excuse for turning in late work, so draft and print well in advance.

**Attendance:** Attendance is essential. One absence will be tolerated without much penalty (except that in-class activities generally cannot be made up later). After a second absence, the overall course daily work grade will be lowered by one letter grade at the end of the semester. After a third absence, your overall course grade will be lowered by one letter grade at the end of the semester. For each subsequent absence, your course grade will be lowered by one letter grade at the end of the semester.

**Plagiarism:** In accordance with English Department and University policies, “Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation as one’s original work’ (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty up to and including immediate assignment of the grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.” The best argument against plagiarism is that you cheat yourself out of the education you are here to obtain when you copy someone else’s work. If you believe that a specific instance in your writing might constitute plagiarism, please consult me prior to turning in the final draft.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and want to receive appropriate accommodations, contact the Coordinator of the Office of Student Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

## Course Calendar

This calendar is subject to changes and additions at my discretion. Assignments are due on the date that they are listed on this schedule.

- 8-22 Course Introduction
- 8-29 *Writing Genres* Chapter 1  
*Genre and the New Rhetoric* Chapter 1  
*Scenes of Writing* Chapters 1-2
- 9-5 LABOR DAY: No Class
- 9-12 *Writing Genres* Chapters 2-3  
*Genre and the New Rhetoric* Chapters 2-5  
*Learning and Teaching Genre* Introduction
- 9-19 Genre Analysis draft due for peer response  
*Genre and the New Rhetoric* Chapters 6, 9, and 10  
*Scenes of Writing* Chapter 3
- 9-26 Genre Analysis due  
*Writing Genres* Chapter 4  
*Learning and Teaching Genre* Chapter 7  
*Genre in the Classroom* Chapters 1-2  
*Scenes of Writing* Chapter 4
- 10-3 *Writing Genres* Chapter 5  
*Genre and the New Rhetoric* Chapters 11-12  
*Learning and Teaching Genre* Chapters 1-2  
*Genre in the Classroom* Chapter 4
- 10-10 *Writing Genres* Chapter 6  
*Learning and Teaching Genre* Chapters 4 and 6  
*Genre in the Classroom* Chapters 5-6 and 9
- 10-17 *Writing Genres* Chapter 7  
*Learning and Teaching Genre* Chapters 8-9  
*Genre in the Classroom* Chapter 7  
*Scenes of Writing* Chapter 5
- 10-24 Genre Critique draft due for peer response  
*Learning and Teaching Genre* Chapters 3 and 5  
*Genre in the Classroom* Chapters 8 and 11  
*Scenes of Writing* Chapter 8
- 10-31 Genre Critique due  
*Learning and Teaching Genre* Chapters 10-12  
*Genre in the Classroom* Chapters 12-13

- 11-7 *Learning and Teaching Genre* Chapters 13-15  
*Scenes of Writing* Chapters 9-10  
“Pedagogical Dissemination of a Genre...” article on e-reserve
- 11-14 Oral Preview of Journal Article  
*Genre in the Classroom* Chapters 14-17  
*Scenes of Writing* Chapters 6-7
- 11-21 THANKSGIVING RECESS: No Class
- 11-28 Journal Article draft due for peer response  
Course Evaluations
- 12-5 Journal Article due  
Journal Article Oral Presentations