Fall, 2012
English 680: Seminar in Rhetoric's Methodologies

Patricia Sullivan, instructor
sullivanatpurdue@gmail.com
http://patriciasullivan.org
office hours: 10-11 Wednesdays; 2:30-4 Fridays
[other teaching/responsibilities: job group 3:30-5:30 Wednesdays; attend Hutton Lectures
3:30-6 Thursdays; Modern Rhetoric 11:30-2:30 Fridays]

It comes as little surprise that no one methodological approach reigns supreme in Rhetoric and Composition. We can witness this landscape via institutional units: Communication departments loosely divide their work into empirical research, production, and rhetorical criticism; English departments focus primarily on literary criticism, literary theory, creative writing, and composition; Education departments study writing and its instruction in k-12 environments; Linguistics, Professional Writing/Communication, and ESL get moved around; some institutions also have writing departments or humanities departments. So, efforts to establish a research identity for Composition Studies that we can trace since the 1950s or so contends with competing (and already established) conceptions of what it means to study and teach rhetoric.

Concomitantly, our [individual, collective, and disciplinary] methodologies are neither stable nor non-contradictory as we move across the landscapes of making meaning in rhetoric's [*lingua franca* term for composition, rhetoric, communication, writing, etc.] domains. In fact, when we build method palaces for inquiry and/or pedagogy that are methodologically inventive, these efforts often attract (and usually don't endure) quick and sometimes vicious attack. So, while we preach ecumenism (or interdisciplinarity, pluralism etc.) widely and loudly, we also police those approaches that threaten the health of favored others, and ultimately we profess a collective identity that somehow seems to operate like a migratory catechism.

We recognize that *to do* research we need stable conditions, assumptions, and/or settings--at least temporarily--as not every condition can be captured if it moves too quickly, assumptions rarely can be questioned simultaneously and comparisons usually cannot be made without "fixing" time or categories or genres or cultures and so on. Since most intellectual work beyond initial affect or knee jerk response is built on extended inspection and on overt or implied comparison, it is necessary to find ways to stabilize some dimensions so that others can be compared. Of course this fixing of the analytic gaze encourages complexities involving definition, size of studied units, inclusion, exclusion, and missed opportunities. We might be tempted--in a somewhat histrionic fit of romanticism, at least that's what we'll later claim--to think we are following Kurtz into *The Heart of*

Darkness ("Oh the horror"). To guard against that possibility we will work to arm ourselves with experiences and tools we can use to build methods and evidence we can defend on our journey toward methodological stasis.

We will ask and explore such questions as: How are "method" and "methodology" related? The terms are entangled in fascinatingly maddening ways: 1) some researchers/scholars maintain no distinction between the two (both are procedural rules accepted as disciplining certain types of work); 2) for some methodology is the philosophy of knowledge making and methods are applications chosen to link methodology to particular research problems or researching situations; 3) methodology also might refer to analysis of the principles underlying method, or as Paul Lynch recently wrote about casuistry, "way of talking about method"; 4) for some methodology is the description of the rules governing methods; 5) for some methodology are a set of beliefs that ground any and all inquiry, allowing some methods and not even seeing others. I'll stop at 5, but don't find the potential relationships exhausted (see *Opening Spaces*, p. 11 for others of my thoughts on this).

Goals of course

Since this is a seminar, today we will set goals and activities as a class. Let me suggest some that seem appropriate:

- Consider (primarily through reading, discussion, and thought) the impacts particular methodological allegiances have on knowledge-making practices and their acceptance in disciplinary communities or subcommunities (with particular focus on our field) and identify/embrace some of your own assumptions.

- Because "cases" cross the boundaries of research and teaching, interrogate how they operate in (particularly how they build) knowledgemaking related to research and to pedagogy.

- Expose some usually hidden dimensions of methodology to examination and reflection (I'm thinking both of method/methodology

relationships and of the more popular work on linkages among components of research).

- Work with data (including information, documents, artifacts, files, recorded materials, databases and so on) in order to practice sorting, targeting, finding, elaborating with, and reducing data, to sensitize oneself to patterns, and also to examine the linkages among data, methods, and methodologies in various phases of studies (i.e., design, collection, analysis, theory/account).

- Practice parts of a "study" that depends on working with data and contributes to rhetoric and composition through appropriate pilot work.

- Better understand the many ways in which research needs to be collaborative.

The course will not focus exclusively on reading and critique, nor will it cover **all** of rhetoric's methods for making knowledge. We will breeze through some common approaches--pedagogical cases, research cases, ethnography, and historical/bibliographic work--then settle into data analysis and topics chosen by the participants.

Reading

You should purchase two books:

- Emily Tuhiwai Smith. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples.* 2nd ed. (London: Zed Books, 2012)

- Duneier, Mitchell. *Sidewalk.* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999)

I have digital copies of the following books that I expect we will reference frequently:

- Foucault, Michel. *The archaeology of knowledge.* A. M. Sheridan Smith, trans. (New York: Pantheon, 1972)

- Strauss, Anselm L. *Qualitative analysis for social scientists.* (Cambridge: U of Cambridge Press, 1987)

- Sullivan, Patricia, and Porter, James E. *Opening spaces.* (Ablex, 1997)

- Yin, Robert K. *Case study research: Design and methods.* 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003)

I will distribute a bibliography of other digital books and articles available for and possibly useful to your work.

Workload and Grading

30% participation (reading, talking, and working alone and with others). We will try to work on exercises (and build an exercise notebook for your future use). We also will work with project parts that assist you in your own work and may help others. For example, I will ask some students writing their dissertations to bring in some data for us to help them code. Also, Jenny Bay and I need to do video interviews of students who participated in internships last summer, so we can help in assembling interview questions (and/or even taping a couple). I have some mapping exercises. If needed, we might collaborative develop or use test materials for pedagogical work. And, if you have other suggestions, we'll entertain them. Nonattendance will lower this component of the grade, as you have to be in class to do some of the work.

50% own project (this will vary). All projects should include some data that is analyzed in some way. You also will keep me apprised of your progress throughout the semester and present on the project during the last class.

20% pedagogical offering (might be a case, instructional video, instructional materials for teaching video, etc.) for a research pedagogy. For at least some of you I would like this to be a portfolio piece (i.e., something that could be sent to prospective employers or uploaded to your website): it might be a unit that instructs professional writing majors in interviewing SMEs, or a case that simulates some aspect of research (e.g., research ethics).

Tentative Schedule

8.22.12	opening session

8.29.12	remembering and forgetting: historiography, digital bibliographic & archival work
	     read: Royster, "Disciplinary landscapes"; White, "The historical event"*;* Derrida, "A certain impossible possibility"; Certeau, *Practice*, ch 6; Certeau, *Writing history* ch 1; Freshwater, "Allure of Archive"
	
	     exercise 1: on bibliography
	     list of ideas for your project

9.05.12	learning: case pedagogy
	    read: Sibley, ch 3 and 5; Naumes/Naumes, ch 1-3; Powell, "The Achievement (K)not"; Haraway, f
	    rom *Modest_witness*; Foucault, "Of other spaces"; Schonberger, from *Delete*, ch 1
	    exercise 2: a) find a case appropriate to a class you teach and b) talk about how you would use it
	    (include modifications you would make)
	    description of project (1 page limit) [for those not ready for this, keep listing]

9.12.12	inquiry: case research [question/design linkage]
	    read: Yin, *Case study research* (ch 1 and 2); Wolcott, "Posturing"; Sullivan/Porter, *Opening spaces* ch 3;
	    Herndl/Nahrwold; Humphreys, from *Sociologist as a voyeur*; Guinier et al from "Becoming gentlemen"
	    write: exercise 3:

9.19.12	embedded work: ethnography
	    read: Duneier's *Sidewalk;* Geertz, "Blurred Genres"; Bell, "Yes, Virginia, there is a feminist
	    ethnography"
	    remember: Cintron's *Angel's town;* Heath's *Ways with words*; Dourish and Bell's *Divining a digital future*
	    write:

9.26.12	methodology through colonial and decolonial lenses
	    read: Tuhawai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies*; Cintron, "Wearing a pith helmet at a sly
	    angle"
	    write:

10.03.12	disciplinarity in research: how does it frame and enforce research questions, methods, etc.? reading coming
10.10.12	break week [work informally]
10.17.12	building methods
10.24.12	analytics 1 – narrative-based coding
10.31.12	analytics 2 – terms and themes as hooks and probes
11.07.12	analytics 3 – maps and other spatial approaches
11.14.12	stitching together a research pedagogy
11.21.12	thanksgiving [no class]
11.28.12	wrap up class and finish any outstanding group work
12.05.12	project presentations

Starting Place

So, among other things, we are
In Search of. . . .

1) reflective doing

Research as reflective doing is an attitude that I think should be developed more in rhetoric and composition.

Aside: Reflective work is already a part of PW/TC/and even WID thinking. To think about reflective work in my area, I have assembled a team to help me: I usually turn to a constellation of thinkers Donald Schön's *Reflective Practitioner* and add in Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger's *Situated Learning* as another advisor, then turn to Herbert Simon's *Sciences of the Artificial,* Lucy Suchman's *Plans and Situated Actions*, David Sibley's *Geographies of Exclusion,* and more recently include Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking Fast and Slow*. Schön discusses how reflection in action (or in the practice of a profession) leads to better work, and since he studies professions that will be used by students I teach, it resonates. Then Lave and Wenger also talk about learning how to do skilled tasks at work by watching experts and absorbing as one does ancillary or menial tasks that do contribute. Simon and Suchman teach me about situating and enculturating experiences, embracing partial pictures and machine-

enfused views; Sibley helps me apply Foucault through notions of policed boundaries; and Kahnemann's new work summarizes his life's work on everyday reasoning and decision-making. This constellation of thinkers discuss with me how to focus on studying *work* as a reflective activity, and I add a focus on writing as work . . . I see writing as a reflective doing at work because it offers ways to both study thorny problems and to build a collaborative platform of accepted texts as a response to those problems.

2) a disciplinary identity (or maybe a couple)

This is a thorny problem that swirls around R/C and later will be descried as a goal by Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies*. But, at least since the early 1980s, rhetoric and composition (this is shorthand for a group of program names that operate mainly in English Studies) has worked to establish itself as a field/discipline/interdisciplinary group. Inspired by expansion of specialized study in higher education, a dedicated group began doctoral programs, journals, specialized conferences, and so on alert to establishing the components of a discipline [for current traces of this organized work see: the doctoral

consortium site, the visibility project in NCTE, the Masters consortium, and the list of undergraduate majors and minors in writing]. A particularly important component was establishing agreed upon methodologies to underpin the making of knowledge. Perhaps inspired by Jean-Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1984/1979) and by efforts in literary studies to forge a history of English studies (most notably Richard Ohmann's *English in America* and Gerald Graff's *Professing Literature: An Institutional History*), a string of statements on knowledge-making in composition littered the 1980s (including Janice Lauer's "A Dappled Discipline," Louise Phelps' *Composition as a Human Science*, Stephen North's *Making of Knowledge in Composition*, and the first of the Octalogs).

Initially the aspiring discipline they were building was very inclusive in order to gain sufficient numbers to survive and grow. "Pluralism" a rallying cry, and methodological borrowing a fact, they rarely excluded a method or approach that was authorized by disciplines they considered allied in the study of human communication. Now, over thirty years later, we could slant this course toward the role of methodology in both the current state of and the thirty-year development of disciplinarity and knowledge making processes. Of course we should resist such a move that might make us pompously smug in ways that invite comeuppance. It would also be yet another survey of past/present thinking, which I don't think serves you well at this point.

A more important calling tugs at this course. You need to write a dissertation. If we spend this semester examining the methodology that you are forging for your work, from perspectives such as --
what belief systems you are invited to pledge allegiance to
what methods are accepted, rejected, celebrated, tolerated by the "field"
how methods and belief systems link up,
how issues matter,
how technologies, techniques, and tools shape research possibilities--
you are better prepared to start/continue that important work. You need to be able to explain and defend the choices you make about the "how" of your work.

So, we will focus more on reflective doing than on reading. Don't be sad if you are a person (like me) who loves to read to read: there are plenty of texts to encounter, seek, and use.

3) comfortable terminology talk
While we need a book that does what Raymond Williams' *Keywords* did for cultural studies, and *Opening Spaces* spent a chapter trying to emulate it (without much success, in part because I didn't understand I should be emulating Williams when I was writing), it

also is the case that etymological derivation is only a partial answer to our real need, i.e., a shared vocabulary.

I hope that evolves during the class in a more comprehensive way than simply tied to one project. That is why the first part of the class takes up familiar topics (and tries to cover some of North's categories of knowledge making groups – the historian, the lorist, the clinician, and the ethnographer). In the first few weeks, before our doing takes total hold, we will read and talk about historiography, cases from the directions of building pedagogy and conducting research, and ethnography.

Terminology of a certain type will grow from our responses to those readings. But do not be surprised if it is countered by another kind of terminology that takes hold during analysis. As Big Max says, "We shall see."

4)handy tools for work
This is usually where research methods classes in composition studies either give you a rubric or sit in a circle and share. The first approach is comfortable, as you want to be told what to do, but in complex social studies it often offers little long-term help. The second approach may work, depending on what is said in the circle, but often you are listening too closely to the clinician (and not closely enough to the others in the circle) or the for some reason those in the circle don't provide enough context for you to connect the insights to your work.

So, I'm thinking that some of the handy tools might be more tangible: research memos, how to make coding heuristics, interrogating metaphors systematically, developing protocols for data audits, and so on. More on this later.

5)other ways to assemble knowledge work's writing
We also seek ways to better capture our research. I can remember when Jeff Grabill wanted to use a live case to illustrate and add argumentative backing to a theoretical argument he was making about civic literacy. There was considerable discussion about *how* that could be done to make it clear that this was "live" and not hypothetical, about how he would reflect his case study methods, etc. When Gail Hawisher and I wrote a case into an MLA style edited collection, we were aware that most of the audience didn't want to read about our methods, so we put them in discursive footnotes. [aside: I always wanted to experiment with a layout that mimicked "Stabat Mater" too.]

While these discussions often focus on format, that focus may be derived from our lack of language (see #3 above) or agreement on how the knowledge we "make" is represented and valued by both ourselves and others. Peter Smagorinsky (we read this in 625) talks about the submissions to *RTE* as "lacking" some basics of method. What if that lacking is needed to change the

ways in which we write about our inquiries? and, more pertinent to you, can "I" get away with change? [remembering that Picasso's cubism was accepted in part because his traditional portraiture skills were pristine].

We probably are in search of other concepts, ideas, and practices. Those will emerge.

Other Books you may want to read . .

[I've included books that really struck me as I was thinking about this course. They niggle at simple constructions or terrorize normal order or remind us of deep truths about why we care that research is done carefully, thoughtfully, responsibly. And, in the case of Kassow's piece, they depict scholarly method as a group's hope and source of strength.]

Paul Shankman. *The Trashing of Margaret Mead: Anatomy of an Anthropological Controversy* (U Wisconsin P, 2009) [interrogation of the disciplinary dispute over the reputation of Margaret Mead; fascinating study of why the academy gets quite confused when the public gets involved]

Samuel D. Kassow. *Who Will Write Our History?: Rediscovering a Hidden Archive from the Warsaw Ghetto* (Vintage, 2009) [popular historical account of how Polish Jews in Warsaw worked to assemble an archive that could be used to write their history after they had been exterminated; ok, I cried a lot while reading this poignant account]

Daniel Kahneman. *Thinking Fast and Slow* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011) [account of his theory of cognition and decision making; particularly important if you are interested in everyday decision making]

Clare Hemmings. *Why stories matter: The political grammar of feminist theory* (Duke UP, 2011) [study of how stories are used by feminists in their journals in the past 20 years; particularly important if you are doing a study of printed scholarship]

Judith Halberstam. *The queer art of failure* (Duke UP, 2011) [use queer theory to underpin her development of low theory as a way to account for and come to grips with failure; a theoretical lens that might be useful in studying writing]

Michael Lynch, Simon A. Cole, Ruth McNally, & Kathleen Jordan. *Truth machine: The contentious history of DNA fingerprinting* (U of Chicago P, 2008) [case study/history that tackles, technology and how evidence becomes convincing; much more compelling than *Laboratory Life* was]

Bruno Latour. *Aramis, or the love of technology* (Harvard, 1996) ["case" study of a failed personal rapid transit project in Paris; used to interrogate the boundaries of case research]

you can nominate others. . . .

References for Assigned Readings

Wk 2: Remembering and Forgetting

- Blair, Carole. Contested histories of rhetoric: Politics of preservation, progress, and change. *Quarterly Journal of Speech 78*.4 (1992): 403-28.
- deCerteau, Michel. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. Steven Rendall, trans. Berkeley, CA: U of California Press. ch 6. (I apologize for having the old trans)
- deCerteau. Michel. (1988). *The writing of history*. Tom Conley (trans.). New York: Columbia UP, 1988. ch 1.
- Derrida, Jacques. (2007). A certain impossible possibility of saying the event. Gila Walker, trans. *Critical Inquiry*, 33 (Winter), 441- 461.
- Freshwater, Helen. (2003). The allure of the archive. *Poetics Today, 24* (4), 729-58.
- Royster, Jacqueline Jones. (2003). Disciplinary landscaping, or contemporary challenges in the history of rhetoric. *Philosophy and Rhetoric, 36*, (2), 148-167.
- White, Hayden. (2008). The historical event. *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies, 19* (2), 9-34.

Wk 3: Cases in Pedagogy

- Foucault, Michel. (1986). Of other spaces. *Diacritics*.
- Haraway, Donna J. (1997). *Modest_witness@second_millennium. Femaleman©_meets_Oncomouse™*. New York: Routledge. [pp 23-39]
- Mayer-Schonberger, Viktor. (2009). *Delete: The virtue of forgetting in the digital age*. Princeton: Princeton UP. ch 1
- Naumes, William, and Naumes, Margaret J. (2006). *Art and craft of case writing*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe. online in library:

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/purdue/docDetail.action?docID=101781 39> [ch 1-3]
- Powell, Linda C. (1997). The achievement [k]not: Whiteness and "black underachievement." In Michelle Fine, Lois Weis, Linda C. Powell, and L. Mun Wong (eds.) *Off white: Readings on race, power, and society* (pp. 3-12). New York: Routledge.
- Sibley, David. (1995). *Geographies of exclusion: Society and difference in the west*. London: Routledge. [ch3 and ch 5]

Wk 4: Cases in Research

- Herndl, Carl G., and Nahrwold, Cynthia A. (2000). Research as social practice: A case study of research on technical and professional communication. *Written Communication,* 17 (2), 258-296.
- Humphreys, Laud. (1997/1970) from The sociologist as voyeur. Excerpted in Ken Gelder and Sarah Thornton (eds.) *The subcultures reader* (pp. 231-245). London: Routledge.

- Guinier, Lani, Fine, Michelle, and Balin, Jane (1994). Becoming gentlemen: Women's experiences at one ivy league law school. *University of Pennsylvania Law Review, 143* (1), 1-111. [discuss in class what parts to read]
- Sullivan, Patricia, and Porter, James E. (1997). *Opening spaces: Writing technologies and critical research practices*. Greenwich, CT: Ablex. [ch 3]
- Wolcott, Harry F. (1992). Posturing in qualitative inquiry. In Margaret D. LeCompte, Wendy L. Millroy, and Judith Preissle (eds.) *The handbook of qualitative research in education* (1-52). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Yin, Robert K. *Case study research: Design and methods*. 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003) [ch 1-2]