

**Conference on the Future of English Studies  
University of Illinois at Springfield  
October 16 & 17, 2009**

**Friday, October 16**

8:00-8:30 Coffee and Breakfast

8:30-9:00 Registration and Welcoming Remarks  
Public Affairs Center (PAC): Brookens Lounge

**9:00-10:30 Keynote Address: Richard Miller, Rutgers University**  
**“The Center Cannot Hold: Living and Learning in a Networked Age”**  
**Public Affairs Center (PAC): Brookens Auditorium**

**Session A: 10:45-12:00**

A.1 Toward a Visible Curriculum: Making Our Work Visible through Assessment, Technology, and Outreach

University Hall Building (UHB) 1006

Chair: Christine Tardy, DePaul University

“Making Our Work Visible through Outcomes-Based Assessment.” Anis Bawarshi, University of Washington

“Making Rhetoric Visible via Multimedia Approaches.” Mary Jo Reiff, University of Tennessee

“Using Outreach to Increase the Visibility of English Studies.” Angela Jones, Western Kentucky University

“Making Rhetoric Visible by Defending Academic Freedom.” Matthew Abraham, DePaul University

Session Description:

We in English Studies frequently hide behind claims that our work is too complex to be articulated, resist assessment as a form of co-optation and corporatization, and reinforce unconstructive dichotomies (between technologies and our humanistic goals or between our disciplinary goals and their practical or public uses). These stances are driven by the assumption that mystification is a strategy of resistance that being hidden makes us less vulnerable to bureaucratic impositions on our intellectual freedom. Increasingly, though, it is becoming clear that such strategies have left us more vulnerable and less powerful, leading to isolation not only in terms of how the rest of the university or greater public perceives what we do, but also in terms of how we, within English departments, perceive what we do. But what exactly does it mean to make ourselves visible through articulation and assessment? How can visibility be a form of security and strength rather than a vulnerability? And how can we create visibility within English Studies? To answer these questions, our panel will briefly present examples of how assessment, technology, and outreach (to local communities and broader publics) at four different universities present opportunities to make our work visible. Following opening presentations, we will break into groups to examine the issues raised and then reconvene as a large group for the final 20 minutes to synthesize our discussions.

A.2: Literature, Rhetoric, and Aesthetics

UHB 1007

Chair: Michael Gammon, UIS

“Cultural Studies, Cognitive Rhetoric, and the Future of Literary Studies.” Erin Williams, University of Kansas.

Drawing upon cognitive metaphor theory, I will demonstrate how a cognitive approach to literature simultaneously demands literary, rhetorical, and linguistic methodologies, making clear the need for English studies to research the ways literary texts affect us individually, socially, and cognitively.

“The Aesthetics of Production Work in Writing Instruction and English Studies.” Michael R. Moore, DePaul University

What we can learn from an inquiry into the aesthetics of production culture is a generative understanding of the belief systems and values -- real, imagined, or aspirational -- associated with print and digital literacy practices of students, teachers, and scholars.

**12:00-1:00 Lunch PAC Restaurant**

## **Session B: 1:10-2:25**

B.1: Politics, Composition, and the Public Sphere

UHB 1006

Chair: Lan Dong, UIS

“Politics and Aesthetics: Public Writing in/and Emerging Media.” Michael Donnelly, Ball State University

“Across the Divide: Political Rhetoric and the Teaching of English.” Dani Weber, Ball State University

“Student Agency in Public Writing.” Matthew Balk, Ball State University

“Using Web 2.0 and the Public Sphere to Foster Public Writing in Composition Classrooms.” Casey McArdle, Ball State University

### Session Description:

Today’s students come to us with a different set of literacies than we have been accustomed to in the past. It is tempting to view this apocalyptically -- doom for the Humanities in general and English studies in particular. Instead, we must reconceptualize our own relationship(s) (intellectually and aesthetically) to developing technologies and new literacies. English can and should take a lead role in interdisciplinary study that foregrounds the historical, political, and cultural contexts of text production, developing technologies, and emerging literacies. In this panel, we propose to contribute to this process in a multi-modal presentation exploring multiple sights of contention, including political rhetoric, the public sphere, and developing technologies.

## B.2: Service Learning, Gender Differences, and Student Transformation

UHB 1007

Chair: Cynthia Wilson, UIS

“Middle School Engagement and Motivation Through Service Learning.” Kelly Meyer, University of Missouri, St. Louis.

This presentation will analyze the benefits of Service Learning for the students in a community school site in north St. Louis County. Citing the work of Freire, Delpit, and Morell, as well as personal classroom experience, I will discuss the effects that Service Learning has on student engagement and motivation, recognizing the value of support systems, role models, and meaningful, contextually relevant lessons.

“Exploring Service in Campus Organizations: A Model for Service-Learning in First-Year Composition.” Ashely M. Watson, Miami University, OH

In this presentation the speaker will examine the question of whether service-learning goals of social transformation and critical reflection are viable and successful in first-year composition classrooms.

**2:35-4:30 Workshop: "Working with Text and Image in the Networked Age"**  
**Richard Miller, Rutgers University**  
**Readings to be posted**

**Session C: 4:45-6**

C.1: The English Department/Curriculum

UHB 1006

Chair: Donna Bussell, UIS

"Asking *Where?* Two-Year Colleges and English in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." Robert Mawyer, Rock Valley College

In this discussion-based presentation, I will examine the extent to which two-year and community colleges are uniquely positioned to contribute to and perhaps transform English Studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By exploring *where* in addition to what, how, and why, we might open up new ways of envisioning the future of English of Studies.

"English Studies for the Drop-Out: What Failures Can Teach Us About the Meaning of Success." Pegeen Reichert Powell, Columbia College

In this presentation, I introduce the topic of retention as a valuable perspective on the central question of the conference. If a student drops out before earning the degree, what is the purpose of those one or two courses she took in English Studies? What types of reading and writing do we believe would most benefit them as citizens, as parents, as workers, as humans? The point of my presentation is to demonstrate how the problem of drop-outs can reframe the questions themselves in important ways.

"What to Look for When Looking at Gender and Language in Student Writing." Kristi McDuffie, Eastern Illinois University

I will review the results of gender and language studies to detail the gender differences that have been found in spoken and written communication, so that educators can become aware of the gender dynamics that may be evident in their classrooms. I argue that instructors should be sensitive to differences -- not to make generalizations based on masculine and feminine identities, but to be aware of our approaches toward students, to help students gain language awareness, and to respond to gender differences in writing the way instructors would respond to other facets of diversity.

## C.2: "Technology and the Economy: Critically Facing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges"

UHB 1007

Chair: Sara Cordell, UIS

"Teachers, Technology, and Curriculum: What a School Can Do to Get Staff Support of Technological Innovation." Michael Finnell-Gudwien, Williamsville Schools and UIS

As methods for teaching secondary English become more reliant on technology, teachers find themselves forced to incorporate technology as an integral part of their curriculum. Oftentimes, this technology simply is presented to the teacher with a here you go use it directive. Some teachers embrace the challenge; others, usually amongst the veteran teachers, oppose it. How does a school district reconcile this curricular discord?

"Not an Ostrich: Writing Teachers and the Responsibility to Address Changing Needs/Demands." Abbey Kanzig, Bowling Green State University

"Generating Relevance: English Studies During Economic Collapse." William H. Thelin, University of Akron.

These presenters critically examine the use of technology in the composition classroom, focusing on the manner in which it can obfuscate economic issues and exacerbate power differentials among students. The first presenter examines the manner in which social-epistemic rhetoric can unveil the "othering" that takes place in the traditional computer classroom while also suggesting avenues for a critically aware method of using computers with students. The second presenter feels English Studies will find its relevance for the 21st Century in social justice teaching and claims that online pedagogy has taken the field of composition away from this mission. He differentiates between using critical theory in the classroom and truly enacting a critical pedagogy, arguing that the latter will best serve students who have come to college under the false pretense of securing an economic future for themselves.

**6:00-8:00 Cocktails and Dinner PAC Restaurant**

**8:00 Dinner Speaker: Ray Schroeder, UIS Professor Emeritus, Director Center for Online Learning, Research and Service (COLRS)**

**"Online Education and the Technology Petting Zoo" PAC C-D**

**Saturday, October 17**

**8:30-9:00      Registrations  
                    Coffee and Breakfast**

**Session D: 9-10:15**

D.1: Translations and Transformations  
UHB 1006

Chair: William J. Carpenter, High Point University

“Connecting the N and the L: TransNational Studies, TransLation Studies, and the Future of Productive Failure in English.” Christopher Keller, University of Texas – Pan American

Scholarship in composition, rhetoric, and literacy studies is increasingly adopting "transnational" perspectives and methodologies, yet these tend to be, often unintentionally, strongly U.S. Centric. The presentation examines theoretical trends in translation studies and American studies, as well as an analysis of how rhetoric and composition has treated "borderlands," as a way to propose scholarly methods in the field that break out of nationalist habits.

“Writing Program Hubris: A Return of the Repressed Origin of American Literature and Rhetoric – the Cause of English Studies.” Jim Ottery, UIS.

Some American Indian Scholars theorize that new technologies mark a return to a more “oral-tradition” type of culture. The writing and reading of this subject leads to recognition that the violence resulting against the Native culture since first contact always forgets, represses, and results in violence. In other words, the destruction of culture has played out in the history of English Studies as in all history of this country to the extent that the repression of literate/literary knowledge has led to the creation of cultural interactions occurring in a contextless, thus, ethical vacuum. Teaching writing separately from the material of its historical origins beckons the return of the repressed.

D.2: Three Approaches to First-Year Composition  
UHB 1007

Chair: Tena Helton

“(Re)Envisioning First-Year Composition as Introduction to Web Rhetorics.” Ehren Helmut Pflugfelder, Purdue University

Instead of a writing-about-writing approach that has students read composition scholarship, write about writing, and perform empirical writing studies, a more effective pedagogy would be a WoW approach that mixes rhetorically situated Web composing with critical yet approachable writing about the Web, digital writing technologies, and Web 2.0 developments.

“Extra! Extra! Read All About It! How Journalistic Writing Can Provide a Different Way for Composition Teachers to Approach Argument.” Wendy VanDellon, Ohio University

This presentation will look at how journalism and some of its inherent qualities can help inform the composition field and perhaps even provide a different approach to teaching and pedagogy.

“Consider the Source.” Meredith Katchen, Missouri Western State University

If students are taught to be dummies, it is a form of entrapment to later accuse them of plagiarism for their lapses of voice. We need to foster a culture of attribution in which students consider and reconsider themselves and their knowledge. I would like to show how adapting critical/evaluative annotations can help build a culture of attribution in which students intensify their engagement with source material, which leads to the amplification of their voices.

**Session E: 10:25-11:40**

E.1: New Courses/New Discipline  
UHB 1004

Chair: Ethan Lewis, UIS

“The Human Technologist: American Gothic.” Tena L. Helton, UIS.

The online environment offers a perfect place to harness the varied skills of Liberal Studies and English Studies students. Using Wetpaint, wiki, and design features, American Gothic students come together to create innovative websites highlighting their analytic and creative writing talents for a real audience.

“Mapping the Matrix: Media Ecology as an Undergraduate Humanities Class.” Jeffrey Martinek, Iowa Wesleyan College

This paper discusses my attempt to involve undergraduates at a small liberal arts college in discussions about the impact of communication technology on education via a Media Ecology course. The course surveys the history of communication, introduces theorists such as Marshall McLuhan, Harold Innis, and Walter Ong, and asks students to debate the impact of current communications technologies on their own education.

“Branding, Service Economies, and English Majors.” William J. Carpenter, High Point University

This presentation attempts to answer the question, “What can I do with an English major?” For starters, English departments need to theorize their relationship to the post-industrial, service economy and consider ways to increase the use-value of a rhetorical education.

E.2: Readers, Writers, and Literature(s)  
UHB 1006

Chair: Stephanie Ebersohl

“English Teacher 2.0.” Nigel T. Bradley, University of Tennessee, Martin

As society changes, the literature that the population reads changes as well. In order to stay relevant to the modern student, English courses need to examine writings that the modern student will have a connection to. The paper will call for a re-examination of what is considered "literature" to include texts in the non-print mediums (songs, movies, television programs, blogs, etc.) in order to fill that vacuum, as well as urging teachers to use text based literature from modern writers.

“The Dialectic of the Symbolic and the Imaginary: Does the Unconscious Text-Message?” Sara Cordell, UIS.

Increasingly departments of English are being pressured to shift the pedagogical emphasis from the consumption of texts to the production of texts. Rather than teaching students to read and analyze literary texts as a primary means of deciphering *effects* of difference (*jouissance*), we are enjoined to encourage students to produce their own texts via Web 2.0 technologies; that is, to enjoy the Other that enjoys them. My question is this: Who or what “produces” the producers of texts that text-message the repressed desire of the Other? Put another way, in this newly mediated model of humanistic pedagogy, this newly minted master discourse in which the subject is simultaneously “connected” to the Other and reduced to product of the Other, where is the master signifier and how does it function once it is uncoupled from the Name-of-the-Father?

E.3: Rhetorical Analysis and Civic Engagement  
UHB 1007

Chair: Jim Ottery, UIS

“Mass Observation and Blogs: A Historical Connection for Composition.” Paul Walker, Murray State University

This presentation describes how I utilized both the blog technology and the historical context of Mass Observation in a composition classroom, couched in the critical technological literacy theories within composition studies. By studying the history of Mass-Observation and emulating the directive and day diary approaches, students were able to draw connections between the online writing with which they are so familiar and the power that contributory media, in any form, projects on the individual and his/her audience.

“Improvised Deliberation: Karl Rove, Stephen Colbert, and Realistic Rhetoric.” Paul Lynch, Saint Louis University

In 2004, an unnamed White House official -- allegedly Karl Rove -- dismissed the reality-based community. Instead, he argued, the administration would create whatever reality it needed. To this alternate reality, Stephen Colbert offers another alternative. Colbert told the graduates of Knox College that life is one long improvisation, one that suggests that life is a series of agreements through which people can engage in mutual discovery. Most in English Studies would probably embrace Colbert's notion of creation over Rove's. The question, however, is whether there is anything in Colbertian improvisation that can offer a check against Rovian improvisation.

**11:45: Lunch and Conference Wrap-Up**  
**PAC Restaurant**

The Conference is co-sponsored by the UIS Strategic Academic Initiatives Grant program, the UIS Speakers Awards Committee, the Office of the Provost, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, The College of Education and Human Services, the Teacher Education Program, and the English Department