

Alison Richardson
ENGL 400
Journal Review

Composition Studies

A Brief Synopsis:

Composition Studies is an impressive journal that spans a range of topics in the professional field of rhetoric and composition. The oldest independent periodical in its field, *Composition Studies* is published biannually. Articles share the goal of preparing future teacher-scholars in the field of composition. This being said, a variety of perspectives and topics are welcome, including but not limited to issues such as *teaching college writing*, *theorizing rhetoric and composing*, and *administering writing related programs*.

Editors: George and Carrie Leverenz at TCU (Texas Christian University), specializing in Composition Theory and Writing Administration.

Journal Website: <http://www.compositionstudies.tcu.edu/index.html>

Items of Interest:

The website is extremely user-friendly and conducive to quick article searches from within the current issue, the next issue (when available), and from an archive of past issues. Clicking on a title of interest yields a paragraph summary of the article. Two very useful additions to the website are online **Course Designs** and **Book Reviews** that can be browsed by issue or title, and in the case of **Book Reviews** also by reviewer or issue. In addition, **Book Reviews** includes work published in the journal's print issues as well as exclusive online reviews. Nicely designed PDF files are available for printing. Included in each issue of Composition Studies, **Course Designs**, as noted on the website:

presents a complete writing or rhetoric course- from its theoretical assumptions and syllabus to a post-course analysis of strengths and limitations. A course design may consist of an individualized approach to a "traditional" writing/rhetoric course as well as a course with particularly innovative goals, structure, or approach. In addition, beginning with the Spring 2004 issue, we welcome discussions of a single assignment and, especially, of an entire curriculum—a required composition sequence, for instance, or a writing emphasis or writing major.

In the current issue of Composition Studies, for example, the course design is by Mary Kay Mulvaney and is titled: *English 401: Composition IV: Theory and Research*. The course she has provided this design for is a course designed to heighten a student's (particularly an English major's) writing ability and knowledge of composition studies.

One of the book reviews is by David H. Roberts, on a book entitled: *Whose Goals? Whose Aspirations? Learning to Teach Underprepared Writers Across the Curriculum*, by Steve Fishman and Lucille McCarthy. One of the central questions the authors ask is whether teachers should favor their own goals, the institution's, or society's? Or, should they give priority to the aspirations of their students?

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Publishing Trends over the past few years:

Recent articles continue to share the subject of composition studies while encompassing such issues as genre in the classroom, ethnicity, multilingual learners, writing invention, liberating voices, composition at small schools, literacy in the digital age, and the list goes on.

Submission Guidelines / Editorial Policy:

I think it's best to list guidelines as the website has, for quick reference:

1. All appropriate essay submissions will be reviewed by two [external readers](#).
2. Manuscripts should be no more than 7,500 words and should conform to *current* MLA guidelines for format and documentation; they should be free of authors' names and all other identifying references, including institutional affiliation.
3. Three titled, letter-quality copies must be accompanied by a cover letter and loose postage sufficient to mail manuscripts to two reviewers.
4. Letters to the editor and responses to articles are strongly encouraged; however, all proposals and submissions intended for publication should be forwarded in hard copy.
5. *Composition Studies* does not encourage the submission of previously published manuscripts or conference papers that have not been revised and extended for a critical reading audience.
6. Those wishing to submit course designs should first print and study the [Course Designs submission instructions](#).
7. Book Review assignments are made from a file of potential reviewers. To have your name added to the file, send a current vita to [Brad Lucas](#), the Book Review editor. Requests to review particular books will not be honored.