

### **Semester Reflection for Dr. Coxwell-Teague's Course**

I was pleasantly surprised by how inclusive this course was, fostered in part by its discussion based format, as well as the makeup and input of my cohort. These discussions led to many insights and a deep interrogation of many critical and pedagogical concepts—some old, but many that I had never encountered, particularly in a formalized, theoretical setting. Feeding off the other students who bring with them varied professional backgrounds, experiences, and positions helped me create a budding teaching philosophy to take into the fall semester (obviously more on that in my teaching philosophy). I was gracious to the others students, the instructor, interns, and plethora of guest speakers who helped make the course critically rigorous but enjoyable.

I believe that throughout this summer course, my strongest efforts were in synthesizing the information from the readings. Perhaps in part due to this synthesis, I did tend to get authors mixed up and wish I had kept better track of the sources that influenced my thinking (especially now as I write this reflection). Though, having the formal reflections on readings due before each class has helped me keep a record of my thoughts that would have otherwise only existed as fragmentarily highlights and curt notes in margins.

I also should probably have spoke out in class more but am proud that I adhered to my self-created rule of commenting at least once during each meeting. My confidence was built greatly during this course as many of my questions on the blog were taken for class discussions or directly answered by another student (with the inherent imbalance of two questions and one

comment, some questions are going to naturally be left unanswered). This helped me feel that my input was valuable. It was great to hear my question become an integral part of the class discussion and have it weave with ideas and experiences I had not thought of before.

My perspective was probably altered the most during this course by Yancey and the many other writings that dealt in some form with the idea of collaboration and presentation in the digital age. Not being familiar with rhetoric and composition theory as others, I had no clue at first that Yancey teaches at FSU, and I was proud that someone so accomplished and important in the field, yet so accessible in writing style taught here. Despite my initial apprehension to incorporate portfolios for grading reasons, Yancey was a big influence on their importance as a way for students to grow.

Perhaps due in part to a defense mechanism in how I was forced to teach many of my high school and middle school lessons with an eye toward state testing, I had started to think of many of many concepts such as plagiarism and certain structures of writing in a fairly dogmatic manner. Everything as collaborative and built upon other sources was a simple yet revealing idea. Attitudes toward assemblage and borrowing in music as described in the Selber and Johnson's piece ("Plagiarism, originality and assemblage") really brought this home for me. It is embarrassing to admit, but I had never thought of plagiarism as such a grey area as Price's "Beyond Gotcha" piece shows. Now, I wonder how I could have ever have ignored how definitions of "common knowledge" and collaboration are ever evolving. In a vague way, I had railed in the past against formats like MLA coming out with new editions for profit and even evaluated art forms like found poetry and remixed music, but our readings and discussions took this even further than I had contemplated before.

Bringing it back to Yancey, I had also never considered how important it was to actively include digital media into rhetoric and composition. Despite interacting daily with these forms of composition, I had never thought of them as being a part of a discourse in the English Department and how doing otherwise could be reductionist to our cause to create critical thinkers who can compose for real-life applications and across mediums.

One final lesson I took from this course was more pragmatic and dealt with how I devoted and balanced my time between coursework, teaching, and outside life. We talked in class about how we are students first, while at the same time need to devote time for teaching. This summer gave a taste for how this balancing act is going to work. As I got more serious into my internship and other factors in my life starting pulling me in other directions, I found it more and more difficult to devote as much time to the readings as I had from the beginning and middle of the course. I am going to have to continue incorporating strategies to fight fatigue/burnout and coping mechanisms for the many hats a graduate student wears.