

2019 ARWS Annual Conference CFP

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Getting It to Stick, Getting Stuck, Sticking with It: Laying Claim to Rhetoric's World-making Capacity in Undergraduate Programs

November 7-9, 2019

Austin, Texas

Sponsored by the Association for Rhetoric and Writing Studies, this conference will provide a space for scholarship, conversation, and collaboration related to all facets of undergraduate programs in rhetoric and writing studies (RWS). As such, ARWS invites proposals on any issue related to RWS undergraduate programs, whether existing, planned, or aspirational. Further, undergraduate and graduate students are invited to submit proposals on any question or issue related to rhetoric and writing studies. The CFP below is intended to cast a broad, ecumenical orientation to the discipline and its current and future pragmatic possibilities.

As we seek to begin, invigorate, re-design, and/or sustain undergraduate rhetoric and writing programs attuned to the complexities students are facing and the futures they (and we) are forging, this call invites us to think about this work on two related fronts:

How might our undergraduate programs in rhetoric and writing studies be responsive to our current cultural and political moment(s)—what is most needed, with and for whom, and what does (or could) rhetoric and writing offer?

and

How might we do the rhetorical and pedagogical work--not only in our courses but also across campus and across town, in our recruitment efforts as well as our assessment efforts—to help others understand and envision not only what rhetoric and writing

might illuminate but also the tangible and pragmatic, symbolic and relational, structural and institutional realities that might be realized, might be collaboratively built through rhetoric and writing?

Arguably, there is no greater joint call or difficulty in the humanities. And as many of you have voiced in different ways, the thorniness of these difficulties is both fueled by and gives fuel to misconceptions or aversions students, administrators, faculty and community partners may have about what “rhetoric and writing studies” is or what it’s good for. And yet this is not merely a marketing issue. It is rather a question of what our disciplinary programs will lay claim to and what (and who) they will produce in and beyond the academy.

This is an especially important question now when, [as I wrote earlier this fall](#) for *Inside Higher Ed*, some of the most urgent concerns we’re dealing with on a regular basis are: the degradation of black, brown and indigenous lives; the deployment of bots and algorithms to heighten in-group loyalties and cross-group tensions; the circulation of false moral equivalencies; “fake news” and outright lies; gaslighting as a primary means of avoiding shared reasoning; an inability to bridge vibrant, volatile differences; the systematic unraveling of public institutions; the privatization of public resources; and a sometimes debilitating sense of deep uncertainty and precarity. Those of us in English departments are implicated in the predicaments of our time and also specially poised to lay claim to the pragmatic promise and practice of public life, a fragile and aspirational experiment in cooperative interdependence.

This call, then, asks us to consider, what we will lay claim to—not for the sake of disciplinary stature but for the purpose of building a world together.

In responding to this call, we invite you take courage and cues from other scholars who have wrestled with this intersection in ways that here and now lay claim to rhetoric’s world-making capacity:

Decolonizing the archive

- Janet Atwill has raised questions about subjectivities and knowledges that are prevalent or policed in liberal arts education premised on rhetoric as a normative archive rather than a productive art.
 - Who is/are ideal students?
 - Whose knowledges are or should be taught, amplified, critiqued, produced?
 - What kinds of knowing do our programs prioritize or penalize? To what end?

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- How do we represent our “ideal students” and the knowledge-building our programs support--to potential and current students, to community stakeholders, to programs across campus, to administrators, to donors, to alumni?
- Siba Grovogui would also have us consider what it means to decolonize the archive; after all, new knowledge is built in relation to existing methodologies, ways of knowing, and bodies of knowledge.
 - What are the range of representations as well as ways of being and ways of knowing supported in our courses and in our programs?
 - How are we orienting undergraduate students to building new knowledge and expanding the archive?
 - What do our students and alumni say about the kinds of experiences they need and want that aren't currently in place yet?

Designing technologies and material practices

- Finnish and Ojibwe scholar Kristin L. Arola, who has researched indigenous material crafting practices, would have us consider what social media platforms, like Facebook, might look like if they were designed by and for American Indians.
- Pueblo artist Cristobal Martinez has theorized the indigenous hacking of materials and technologies as tecno-sovereignty, a means for indigenous peoples to operationalize their sovereignty through designs and uses of technology that combine emerging digital media technologies, old electronic media, and traditional indigenous media.
 - How is your program supporting culturally sustaining and indigenous approaches to the use and design of materials and technologies?
 - How does your program approach hacking and non-normative invention, destruction, and re-purposing of materials and technologies?
 - In what ways and to what degree does your course or your program put various community values and cultural practices in relation to different aspects of the market?
 - How does your program design its recruitment materials with different communities and cultural practices in mind?

Attending to relational consequences

- In last year's keynote address, Dylan Dryer framed these conundrums in relation to the hard problem of intersubjectivity—that what we do with writing and texts is always also a question of how we relate with one another, what we do with each other's differences.

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- How does (or could) your course and/or your program approach or prioritize the hard question of intersubjectivity?
- In what ways do you have students engage others across differences? How does that show up across the arc of the program?
- How do you engage students in writing texts of consequence for themselves and others?
- How does your program take up the hard question of intersubjectivity in relation to labor politics, intellectual work, and programmatic decision-making?

Venturing into “No-Fly Zones”

- GPat Patterson’s research calls us to consider taking up two rarely intersecting areas of scholarship and public discourse in our classroom pedagogies -- in particular the LGBTQ - religious juncture that is what they call “a pedagogical no-fly zone.”
- In his work with women who wear the hijab, Mohammed Sakip Iddrissu notes the ways Muslims on university campuses are regularly viewed and treated as threats, and he advocates for interfaith dialogues and the inclusion of non-Christian religious perspectives in our classrooms.
 - What “pedagogical no-fly zones” should our programs take up?
 - What kinds of infrastructure would need to be in place to support difficult dialogues in and beyond our classrooms?
 - Where are undergraduates already wrestling with junctures that get rarely see the light of day in our courses and programs?
 - How are students and faculty enacting public and counterpublic performances
 - How does your program take up textual and social practices of various communities?
 - How might our programs better understand and support reasoning and argumentation not only within but also across various communities?

Interrogating ecologies and technologies of surveillance

- Ersula Ore asks us to think about racialized practices of civic engagement and the surveillance of Black, Brown and Queer lives and bodies
- Erin Frost and Angela Haas invite us to consider our relationships with body-monitoring technologies often prescribed for our health benefits that may also problematically prescribe our bodies and identities.

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- Asou Inoue has theorized ecological practices of assessment that do not perpetuate institutionalized racism and that actively disrupt racist teaching, learning and writing practices.
 - How does your program and your university track students and their educational progress? What are the underlying logics of those monitoring and assessment practices? How do those practices work together?
 - Who is surveilled at your university, or in your community, and how does that happen? Or who must remain hypervigilant, surveilling themselves?
 - How does your program approach the militarization of university campuses, local communities, university funding streams, and technology design?
 - How do conversations about technologies, surveillance, and identities make their way into your overt and hidden curricula?

Developing local and networked publics

- Crystal Broch Colombini and Lindsey Hall note the invention of “lateral networks among citizens” in response to a “need for new collectives defined and motivated by shared experiences of financial hardship and mortgage institutional alienation.”
- Graduate students at the University of Missouri, faculty at the University of Vermont, faculty at ASU--and countless other faculty-student coalitions across university campuses--have unionized or raised public visibility to address labor inequities.
 - What exigencies do students name as most pressing?
 - How does your program support students theorizing and tooling the rhetorical work of calling into being and sustaining local publics?
 - In what ways are students building coalitions across differences?
 - What is your program’s orientation toward “unruliness” as a site of contestation and invention?
 - What models of public life inform the relationalities, strategies, and technologies that students and faculty call on to get work done in their communities?
 - How might our organization support the kinds of rhetorical work faculty may need to do at their universities to develop a program in rhetoric and writing studies?

Sticking with it, Getting it to stick

- In theorizing a “responsive rhetorical art,” Elenore Long asks us to consider how we invite and respond to the possibilities of early rhetorical uptake—when much about a concern and what’s shared about it are still coming into view.
- John Schilb argues that “rhetorical refusals” have the potential to help political discourse become more inventive.

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- Jonathan Bradshaw encourages us to consider the ethics of striving for “slow circulation” through strategies of “rhetorical persistence.”
- Michele Simmons, Kristen Moore, and Patricia Sullivan invite us to think about “door closers” as sites of methodological innovation, while Meredith Johnson, Michele Simmons, and Patricia Sullivan consider programmatic development attuned to disruptions as sites for inventively negotiating short-term resource deficits with long-term resilience.
 - What impediments or refusals do faculty and/or students face in building undergraduate programs or in fostering deliberation within or beyond the university?
 - How do we need to think about our relationships within the academy as we’re building undergraduate programs over years or decades?
 - How might our programs support students thinking about and taking part in the slow, slogging work of public life with their own communities?
 - Where important ideas or concerns have not yet taken hold with others, what might we do in our universities, in our communities, in this organization to support early rhetorical uptake or methodological innovation?

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PROPOSALS The conference welcomes proposals for **individual presentations** as well as **proposals for panels, roundtables, and posters**. **Presenters are limited to two (2) submissions. Proposals will be accepted until June 30, 2019.**

Workshop Proposals: Workshops will be held on Thursday afternoon, Nov 7, 2019, 1:30-5:00 pm. Workshop proposals are limited to 600 words. [Submit a proposal for a workshop](#)

Individual Proposals: If you submit individually, you will be placed on a 3- or 4-person panel by the Conference Planning Committee. Individual proposals are limited to 300 words. [Submit a proposal for an individual presentation](#)

Panel Proposals: Conference panel sessions will be concurrent, lasting 90 minutes per session. Individual proposals will be grouped into conference sessions by topic. Presenters may propose panels of 3 to 4 presenters and/or poster presentations. You will be asked to submit a summary of the entire panel and a brief description of each paper/poster. Panel proposals are limited to 600 words. [Submit a panel proposal](#)

Roundtable Proposals: Roundtable sessions will be concurrent, lasting 90 minutes per session. Presenters may propose roundtables of 5 to 7 presenters/facilitators. You will be asked to submit a summary of the roundtable and a brief description of how your roundtable will engage participants. Roundtable proposals are limited to 600 words. [Submit a roundtable proposal](#)

Poster Proposals: Faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students are all encouraged to submit poster proposals. Posters may have 1 to 3 presenters. Poster proposals are limited to 150 words. [Submit a poster proposal](#)

We are very interested in **poster proposals** that take up either of these purposes:

1) to showcase, theorize, and commend undergraduate research, rhetoric, and writing. We especially encourage undergraduate students to participate and share their work with us.

2) to depict, theorize, historicize, narrate, dramatize, interrogate, or commend programmatic designs and decision-making regarding curriculum and/or infrastructure related to undergraduate programs.

If you have questions, check out the ARWS website, or email us at: rhetwriting@gmail.com or jlclift1@gmail.com