

Contemporary Composition Theory

ENGL 7822/8822

Mondays, 5:30 – 8:30

Dr. Joseph Jones

jgjones@memphis.edu

When contemporary composition studies emerged as a discipline, its first theories were mostly related to pedagogy: How should we teach writing? While that remains an essential question, focusing exclusively on that question suggests that classroom teaching is somehow theoretically “innocent,” untouched by politics, class, gender, and race. Thus, as the discipline matured those working within it took up other questions: What does it mean to teach writing? What are the political ramifications of writing instruction? What do we know, and not know, about the students with whom we work? What are the economic factors and cultural consequences of “teaching of writing”? This seminar will engage a range of important theoretical texts from the past thirty years as a means of providing a contextual framework for the ways scholars in writing studies have considered the complexities, challenges, responsibilities, and possibilities of college writing instruction.