

CELEBRATION OF STUDENT WRITING



May 8, 2007

Texas A&M-Commerce

FROM THE (INTERIM) DIRECTOR

The inseparable skills of critical reading, writing, listening, and thinking depend upon students' ability to postpone judgment and tolerate ambiguity as they honor the dance between passionate assertion and patient inquiry. ("Academic Literacy: A Statement of Competencies Expected of Students Entering California's Public Colleges and Universities," 2002)

Today we celebrate the results of that dance.

OVERVIEW

Welcome to the first annual Celebration of Student Writing, an event held in honor of researchers completing English 102 this spring and celebrating their final ethnographic projects in literacy studies. Modeled after the celebration by the same name held at Eastern Michigan University (see <http://www.emich.edu/english/fycomp/celebration/index.htm>), our own "Celebration of Student Writing" at Texas A&M-Commerce serves as the culminating activity for many sections of English 102. Today you will get a chance to meet the researchers, view their research portfolios, and otherwise learn about their work as they've experienced it over these past few months.

Represented at these tables are the multiple literacies in our lives: workplace literacies, faith-based literacies, gaming literacies, and—a little more obviously—the various literacies associated with academic and student life. More specifically, the projects we celebrate today explore, among other things,

- *majors* (see Davis's "Farm Life Literacies," Whitman's study of the first-year psychology major ["Probing the Mind of a Psychology Student"] and Jones's "Education in a Classroom" [an ethnographic account of A&M-Commerce students training to become teachers])
- *career choices* (including Harris's analysis of Gregg Animal Clinic, Decker's "In the Minds of Third Graders," Martinez's study of the People's Bank of Paris, Texas, and Handy's ethnographic analysis of Commerce Eye Center)
- *academic disciplines* (like *marketing* [see Kennedy's ethnography about A&M-Commerce's Bistro and Hudson's "Spot Brewery--A Sports Bar"], *veterinary medicine* [see Novak's study of "care levels and how they can change," according to her research at Sachse Veterinary Hospital], *education* [see Helleson's "The Literacy Growth of Children" and Fults's study of the "possible benefits of physical education to children who experience speech delays"], and *psychology/sociology* [see Bell's study of "how people of different races view a neutral character in a story in an attempt to determine whether or not readers ascribe race, ethnicity, or class to otherwise 'neutral' characters"])
- *the extracurricular life of A&M-Commerce students* (see Murphy's study of the A&M-Commerce filming crew ["Fly on the Set"]; studies of fraternities/sororities [including Kappa Alpha (Null), the international music fraternity Mu Phi Epsilon (Wilkerson), the everyday life of a fraternity (Jopson's "To Greek or Not to Greek," Pierce's "The Letter Society," and Sokel's "Defining a Gentleman"), and a sorority (Di Marco's "Sorority Stereotypes" and Thornton's "A New Life")], and the literacies associated with activities and music beyond the school, including area rappers [see Knotts's "Commerce's Finest" and Nnaji's "Something to Rap About"], 1980's punk culture [Pleasant], Deep Ellum Recording Studios [White], the Houston Cattle Show [Colby], Norris's "Horse Show World: Western Pleasure," and a number of studies of the Memorial Student Center, the Morris Recreation Center, the women's soccer team, and the Band Hall)

A number of projects also examined the working life of students at A&M-Commerce, both on campus (see Ramos's "The World of Resident Assistants," for example) and off (see Williams's study of the nursing facility where she works and Smith's exploration of the literacies associated with her work as a front desk clerk at LaQuinta in "LaQuinta . . . Spanish for Literacy"). Several others examined the various literacies associated with faith (see Leftrick's "Sunday Morning at the M.L.K. Church of Christ, for example).

I've listed above only a very few of the interesting and robust research projects represented here today. Please take a moment to view the program, visit with researchers located in the Founders Lounge and the American Ballroom (upstairs), and otherwise celebrate the original and often insightful contributions of these first-year students!

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ethnography is a method of studying and learning about a person or group of people. Typically, ethnography involves the study of a small group of subjects in their own environment. Rather than looking at a small set of variables and a large number of subjects (“the big picture”), the ethnographer attempts to get a detailed understanding of the circumstances of the few subjects being studied. Ethnographic accounts, then, are both descriptive and interpretive; descriptive, because detail is so crucial, and interpretive, because the ethnographer must determine the significance of what she observes without gathering broad, statistical information. (“What is Culture?” *Learning Commons*, <<http://www.wsu.edu:8001/vcwsu/commons/topics/culture/glossary/ethnography.html>>)

As the projects we celebrate today emerged from a very specific curricular design, it seems important to share with you the context and justification for that design. I shall attempt to do so here by responding to two key questions: (1) Why ethnography? (2) Why literacy?

Why ethnography? In first-year composition programs across the country, ethnography is becoming an increasingly common curricular focus. The students whose writing we celebrate today are involved in one such program, though our version of ethnographic inquiry differs from others, as I will explain in a moment. Like Suzanne Blum Malley and Amy Hawkins (2006), Seth Kahn (2003), and the contributors to the collection *Ethnography Unbound* (2004), we are committed to assignment sequences that require research into and the telling of a people’s story, primarily because we believe the lived experiences of others have a lot to teach us about ourselves, our choices, and even our potential majors in college and career choices after college. More importantly, perhaps, we believe in placing students’ experiences at the center of the classroom¹ then expanding outward into the multiple, overlapping, interdisciplinary, extracurricular, and college-/ work-related spaces that will make up the majority of their future reading and writing experiences.

For primarily these reasons, we have asked the English 102 students involved in this Celebration today to develop their own original versions of ethnography. To this end, the projects celebrated here required each of their researchers to read key scholarship in literacy studies, select a research site, gather requisite permissions, identify and interview informants, conduct several extensive field observations, collect relevant artifacts, analyze all fieldnotes/artifacts (extensively and regularly!) to locate recurring themes, and then write it all up in a sustained, 10-15 page academic essay that incorporates information from both primary and secondary sources.²

Why literacy? The way our first-year writing program differs from others that place ethnography at the center is our emphasis on “literacy as it exists when put to use by real people for specific purposes and in specific places” (Carter 6).³ In many cases, first-year writing programs training students to conduct ethnographic research ask them to investigate a particular *community* and somehow “represent” that community through fieldwriting. As Sustain and Chiseri-Strater explain in their popular textbook *FieldWorking*,

¹ Long before I arrived, Dr. Donna Dunbar-Odom, former Director of First-Year Composition here at A&M-Commerce and current Director of Graduate English Studies, began this tradition of placing student experiences at the center of the classroom (see especially her innovative textbooks like *Working with Ideas*, 2001, and *Transitions*, 2005/2006; textbooks that introduce students to a sustained academic discussion on topics like gender in the classroom or faith and religion on campus, then ask them to contribute to the discussion through their own ethnographic inquiry). I am merely building on that tradition, this time with an emphasis on the multiple literacies of our students’ lives.

² Their many assignments, directions for fieldnotes, and information about how (and why) to obtain permissions from participants can be found online at <http://faculty.tamu-commerce.edu/scarter/teaching.htm> (click “English 102”).

³ *Literacies in Context*, the text from which this quote came, was one of the two primary textbooks for this course; the other was Sustain and Chiseri-Strater’s *FieldWorking* (2006).

Fieldwriting is a skill that requires close observation, careful documentation, and rendering of data into thick descriptions of informants within their cultural spaces. To be an accurate and sensitive fieldwriter, you'll need to manipulate your multiple data sources, call on your informants' voices, examine your reflective writing, and craft a text so that it will give your reader a sense of participating in the fieldwork you've experienced. (305)

We want students to develop the skills required to be "accurate and sensitive fieldwriters," but we also want them to shape this fieldwriting in ways that will develop in them the metacognitive awareness necessary to negotiate a variety of different writing tasks in a variety of different rhetorical contexts. Thus the reading and writing assignments included in the first half of the semester (in *Literacies in Context*) were designed to (1) introduce students to the general conversation in literacy studies through key scholarship in the field while (2) generating the space these writers need (and deserve) to test/resist/expand those arguments as presented.

In other words, the writers were required to investigate and then articulate the way literacy functions in a particular context. Our assumption here is that in doing so, students begin to understand literacy in more reality-based and people-oriented ways—ways that require them to examine the project at hand, each new rhetorical context, and their own goals as writers before making any decisions about which rules or strategies to apply to it. Why? As David Barton and Mary Hamilton explain,

Literacy is primarily something people *do*; it is an activity, located in the space between thought and text. Literacy does not just reside in people's heads as a set of skills to be learned, and it does not just reside on paper, captured as texts to be analyzed. Like all human activity, literacy is essentially social, and it is located in the interaction between people. (qtd. in Carter 42)

This isn't an easy concept to grasp. As Brian V. Street explains in the regularly-cited *Social Literacies*, "individuals, *often against their own experience*, come to conceptualize literacy as a separate, reified set of 'neutral' competencies, autonomous of social context" (114, emphasis mine). In an attempt to circumvent these problematic notions of reading and writing, our program works to redefine literacy as a social practice rather than an autonomous skill set.

By focusing on literacy as both an object of scholarly inquiry and the product reproduced through said scholarly activities, we treat first-year composition as "a course about how to understand and think about writing in school and society" (Downs and Wardle 9). By focusing on literacies as they exist *in context*, and asking students to contribute to this scholarly conversation, we are attempting to develop in these beginning college writers a better understanding of "the ways writing works in the world and how the 'tool' of writing is used to mediate various activities" (9). More importantly, we are doing everything we can to make that writing really matter—not as an empty exercise but as a chance to create *real* knowledge. Knowledge that changes how we think about literacy and literacy acquisition and that should, therefore, change how we go about teaching it. Knowledge that continues to change me and what it means to teach writing.

I hope you will enjoy what you see here today. I certainly will!

Shannon Carter, PhD
Department of Literature and Languages

[O]ur cornerstone course must resist conventional but inaccurate models of writing. A re-envisioned FYC shifts the central goal from teaching "academic writing" to teaching realistic and useful conceptions of writing—perhaps the most significant of which would be that writing is neither basic nor universal but content- and context-contingent and irreducibly complex. (Downs and Wardle, 2007)



Dana Coleman, “Feeling ‘Churchy’”

An ethnographic study of the choir room at A&M-Commerce and how the acoustics and things around the room come together.

Shayne Daniel, “Chicken Flying Out the Window”

An ethnography about a new fast food restaurant’s operation and what people think.

John Davis, “Farm Life Literacies”

An ethnographic study of a small farming and ranching operation, with an emphasis on the information recorded as both insider and outsider.

Ashley Duff, “Undiscovered Land”

An ethnography about the horse farm at A&M-Commerce.

Margie Harris, “A World of Opportunity”

An ethnography about Gregg Animal Clinic. I will describe what the clinic looks like and conduct interviews with people that work there.

Corey A. Harrison, “A Season of Faith’s Imperfections”

No abstract available.

Trae Kennedy, “Exceptional Drink Stop (The Bistro)”

An ethnography about how The Bistro at A&M-Commerce operates on a daily basis, describing what The Bistro sells and telling a story about what makes morning beverages and The Bistro so important.

Dean Laing, “Heritage House History”

An ethnography about the history of the Heritage House, a landmark building on the A&M-Commerce campus. I intend to provide the reader with information about how the Heritage House came to be, including the many obstacles it went through over the years and how it was restored and brought back to life. I begin with the birth of the Heritage House and the many people involved in its life.

John Marshall, “Texas A&M University-Commerce Cafeteria”

My project first starts out by describing the physical aspect of the cafeteria. Later on it goes into sort of a story about my overall research.

Cassie Novak, “In the Field of Veterinary Medicine”

“In the Field of Veterinary Medicine” describes care levels and how they can change throughout the process according to Sachse Veterinary Hospital, as revealed through my ethnographic research.

Heather Pantalion, “A Land of Computer Labs”

An ethnography about a computer lab on the A&M-Commerce campus, including comparisons, interviews, and details.

Brian Pearce, "Exploring McDonalds"

An ethnographic account of McDonalds, beginning with a history of McDonalds and followed by a description of the "texts" involved in negotiating McDonalds.

Scott Sadowski, "Beginner's Guide to Retail Pharmacy"

An ethnography about both sides of a retail pharmacy, the customer side and the side behind the counter.

Matt Snyder, "Inside the Band Hall"

An inside look at what happens in the Band Hall and activities related to it.

Alicia Walker, "Sharp Farms (Turner Stock Show)"

I did mine over a lamb and goat breeder farm. I described what goes on and what's done.

Anquinette Whiteman, "Probing the Mind of a Psychology Student"

My ethnographic research project was conducted from the viewpoint of a first-year psychology major. All of the information I have gathered is displayed in the form of a reflection, much like a journal entry, about the research I've done over the past few months.

Andrew Wilson, "Harmony in the Lobby"

A study of the Music Building Lobby at Texas A&M University-Commerce and how it affects the education of the music students and how it is integral to their complete literacy of music.



INSTRUCTOR: BRANDI DAVIS-WESTMORELAND

Keith Aulson, "The Everquest MMORPG Guild Culture"

The original MMORPG game is eight years old; are the players in a high-end guild feeling stagnant?

Patty Aughtry: "College versus Real World Experience"

I observed teachers and students at Phoenix Charter School. My argument was whether college teaches you or prepares students for the problems that many teachers face in the real world of teaching in the classroom.

Patrice Brown: "Treatment And How It Works"

Alpha Home Inc. is a residential treatment facility for Women only in San Antonio Texas. It houses 47 women at 2 locations. Alpha Home is the only women's facility in the area. Treatment and how it works take on a vast area surrounding substance abuse, AA/NA meetings, Counseling, drug/alcohol education and other didactic groups. This is an ethnography about this important place.

Robyn Byrne "Students: Connected to Work and the Teacher"

Shows students response to school work and their relationship with the teacher

Amy Decker: "In the Minds of Third Graders"

Observing the third grade class of Honey Grove Elementary was very interesting and fun! That made my mind clear about becoming a teacher. It is definitely is what I was meant to do.

Theresa Di Marco, "Sorority Stereotypes"

Lists the facts that people don't realize as they make negative comments about sororities. Through observations and interviews I show that sororities are leaders, scholars, and ladies at heart and maybe on the side we like to have fun.

Elizabeth Feagin: "Literacy in the Barrel" (Cracker Barrel)

My project is about Cracker Barrel and the literacy practices that take place.

Adrienne Gibson: "A Tisket, A TAKS Test, Texas Education in a Basket"

An essay on the observations of overly stressed children in our Texas education system. A collection of opinions on the high points, problems, and solutions to the TAKS

Kelly Helleson: "The Literary Growth of Children"

Studies how the social groups or elementary school children affects their literacy.

Ashley Kenner: "First Graders and Their Parents"

I observed my mother's first grade class and I viewed how parental involvement helps shape her student's education. I also did research on how first grade has changed over the past ten years.

LaMarcus Miller: "A Musician in Training"

Most people underestimate the intelligence of true classical musicians. In my paper I reveal the world of a music major at not just A&M-Commerce but any school of music, showing just how in depth and detailed being a music major is.

Selandra Moon, "Literacy in Goodwill Baptist Church"

I will describe my observations of literacy within Goodwill Baptist Church. There is more to religion than just singing and preaching.

Ricia Montgomery, "Books and Snacks"

What do ten women, twelve books and lots of refreshments have in common? Come join the Book Club and find out.

Jessica Peoples, "Inside the Auction"

The Sulphur Springs Dealers Auction is an interesting place to observe and can provide a great deal of insight into how a car auction functions. My ethnography does just this.

Brittany Rust: "The Literacies of Time Warner Cable"

An ethnography about how literacy functions within Time Warner Cable and how it varies within different settings.

Marcus Sandifer "Literacy at the Lake"

The site I chose for my ethnographic project was one of the most frequently visited sites on the TAMU-C campus--Gee Lake. I was able to explore the history of Gee Lake and also, with the help of some informal/formal interviews, discover some of the interesting characters that make Gee Lake the geographical icon that it is today. The combination of ducks, fountains, and every emotion from romance to relaxation, made for an exciting and fun research.

James Seay, "The Literacy of Profanity"

Examines the use of profanity as a tool for integration and communication in a male dominated sub-culture.

Sean Smith, "The Paralyzed Community"

This is an ethnographic analysis that addresses the hidden aspects of the communication process between individuals with paralysis. It is here you can find the unknown truth of those with paralysis.

Elizabeth Thompson: "Ridgeview Townhomes: A Community in Itself"

My ethnographic essay evaluates a tight knit community and how the people and employees interact with one another. The restrictions of approval to live in the community create a certain type group and class. In order to fit in, a person must be a certain way and interact in a certain way.

Tamara Thibodeaux: "The Jerry D. Morris Recreation Center"

Takes a closer look at the Campus Rec and what it offers. Explores the literacy of the rec center.

Kim Williams: "Motivation of Athletic Students Academics and the Athletic Classroom."

Athletic students have a hard time being eligible to compete in various extracurricular activities due to the "No pass, No play" rule. Research shows that if you take away the opportunities for students to compete they will perform better in their academic studies. The gratification in athletic competitions and games comes immediately, when in academics the rewards come later in life.

Leslie Williams, "The Roles We Play"

My ethnographic paper was about the nursing facility that I work for. It mainly focused on how we change and adapt to deal with Alzheimer patients each day. It is called "The Roles We Play" because everyday my role is different. Sometimes, even though I have seen the patients everyday for a year or so, they might not know who I am. So each day I am whatever they need me to be; if they think that I am their daughter, then I am. If they think that I am one of the workers in their cafe, then I play along. Whatever keeps them content and happy, that is what I like to do.

Courtney S. Wilkerson, "Music, Friendship, and Harmony"

For my ethnography project I delve into the world of music and friendships through my observation of and research into the professional international music fraternity, Mu Phi Epsilon. Examples of literacy are seen through the pledging process and it is shown through interviews and observations how this literacy is used once a candidate becomes an active member of the fraternity.



INSTRUCTOR: ELISE FLANAGAN

Jasmine Anderson, "Investigation Spot"

I will be describing my observations over the University Police Station: what they do, the kinds of texts involved in their practices, and much more.

Shauna Banks, "Real World Journalism"

Explores the relationships between editors and all the people involved in the production of a college newspaper.

Heather Binder, “Weekends at Divine Peace”

An ethnographic study of Divine Peace Lutheran church and its members.

A. J. Brown, “MRC: Basketball Courts”

My project is about how students interact with each other in this space.

Brian Brown, “Music Majors: Not as Easy as You Think”

A study of music majors and the time and effort it takes to become one.

Karl Burton, “MySpace Community”

I observed the MySpace community as well as many different aspects of how MySpace is really a community for many people who have it.

Stacie Callahan, “Broken, Yet I Smile”

A study of a real life battered home for children who have suffered from abuse.

Taylor Cobbin, “Smith Hall...Oh, What a World”

Explores Smith Hall and the community that it has become.

Heather Flores-Ricks, “Literacy in the Lion’s Mane Cafeteria”

A study of how much literacy is practiced in the student cafeteria.

LaKeisha Gwalla, “The REAL use of TAMU-C’s Library”

Explores how the use of the library is no longer just for studying but is used for very personal usages that aren’t always school related.

Brandon Kenebrew, “The Library is What that Is”

My project is focused on the library and raises the question of whether or not the library is only a place of study or a place of socialization.

Crystal Rayfield, “WalMart is a Leader in Sponsorship”

WalMart contributes much to communities everywhere, although they have their downfalls.

James Scott, “Literacy Practices and Responsibilities of Residents”

The paper is a study on how student’s responsibilities interfere with their literacy practices.

Olivia Stewart, “Survive Cancer: An Ethnographic Study of the Longview Cancer Treatment Center”

Shows the different types of literacy and how people live as a community trying to survive cancer.

Douglas Weir, “The TAMU-C Agricultural Department Lounge and Equine Center”

A description of the Ag Lounge and Equine Center and other people’s perspectives on these areas.

[L]iteracy has become associated with educational notions of Teaching and Learning and with what teachers and pupils do in schools, at the expense of the many other uses and meanings of literacy evident from comparative ethnographic literature. (Brian V. Street, *Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography, and Education*, 1995).



Michael Cooney, “The Inner Workings of a Processing Center”

This project is about finding out the inner working of a processing center (i.e., a telephone call center that focuses on bill collection), including what makes a processing center work together.

Kennisha Davis, “Typical Day”

An ethnographic analysis of a “typical day” at Outback Steakhouse, from the perspective of the worker.

Tyler Fozdar, “Delving into the World of Online Gaming”

In this ethnography, I have exposed the meaning of literacy within the community of online gaming.

Daniel Frigo, “The Luring and Competitive Sides of Trading Card Games”

This project will find out what attracts people to trading card games, as well as observe what encourages people to be competitive.

Kristal Gebhard, “What’s Your Beef?”

I intend to prove that people who raise cattle are not stupid hillbillies.

Michael Harvey, “Fantasy Role Playing”

I am studying the group of people called gamers that play fantasy role playing games. I will study their slang or special words, the literacies, and the gamers themselves.

Elliot Johnson, “A Cafeteria Ethnography”

This ethnography is about cafeteria workers at A&M-Commerce and how they came to be and why they do what they do.

Henry Laudermilk, “Culture Shock”

An ethnography about a combination of people and the sport table tennis, with a particular focus on the international students who meet to play table tennis at Smith Hall on the A&M-Commerce campus. I tell how the international students interact with others, some of their traditions, and basically the cultural diversity involved.

Paris Nnaji, “Something to Rap About”

Basically, my project is about rappers and how they’re not all thugs and uneducated.

Francesse Palma, “Hanging Out with Three International Students”

My research is about Indian Students at A&M-Commerce living at Smith Hall. I wanted to learn about them as an individual, culture, and the stereotypes they’ve experienced.

Jeremy Rich, “\$1-\$1,000,000”

My project will research the world of a banker and the details of their life and career, explaining the culture and required “flexible” literacy behind the scenes.

Cody Susk, “No Title”

I am studying the A&M-Commerce Lion’s offensive line, specifically what separates them from others on the team.

Heather Reagan, “Gypsy”

I intend to inform my audience that not all bikers are law breaking nomads. I will highlight all the good things bikers do for their communities. Discuss the differences between outlaw bike clubs and family oriented bike clubs, with a strong emphasis towards Gypsy MC.



INSTRUCTOR: LAUREN GLENN

Danielle Amos, “Athletic Training and Females in the Field”

This project will examine the specialized literacies involved with entering the field of professional athletic training, particularly in relation to the training she received in high school and is currently receiving at TAMU-C. She will also explore the apparent discrepancies in the profession which seem to exclude female trainers from jobs with professional football teams although there appear to be considerably more females practicing athletic training at the high school and university levels.

Michael Bolli, “Class of Confidence”

This project explores the question of who is the true consumer in the sport of club gymnastics at ASI in Rockwall, the paying parents or the participating athlete. The texts that are involved in acquiring literacy from athletes to parents to coaches will be discussed, with an interesting argument about what can be considered “readable” texts within this subculture. This ethnographer takes a step back from his insider point-of-view as a coach to explore the outsider observations from the stands of onlookers and parents.

Natalie Brooks, Basketball: For Love or Fun”

I wanted to find out the different reasons that people play basketball. Some play for fun while others plan to make a career of it. I wanted to observe the motivations and different playing styles between the two, with an in-depth examination of the texts and literacies involved in high school basketball

Jennifer Fults, “Gym or Gem?”

This project explores the subculture of elementary physical education, particularly concentrating on the physical education culture of a kindergarten classroom, the teaching methods involved, and the possible benefits to children who experience speech delays. Drawing from her own observations of a kindergarten child with speech delays, this ethnographer attempts to connect the benefits of physical interaction with the improvement of social and educational learning in such an environment.

Beverly Ijeh, “4011 Still Equals Bananas”

I will examine what you see, encounter, and experience in the grocery store at Brookshire’s, concentrating on the physical space and layout of the grocery store, the literacies involved, and the positive and negative encounters between customers and workers.

Matthew Gallo, “The Last Time to Play Hard Ball”

In my research I study and share the rituals and the life of a player in high school baseball in the state of Texas. I look at the importance of involvement in this sport to high school students, the literacies taught by the coaches, and the texts involved in the game.

Brandi Lopez, “Customers Come First”

This project presents an ethnography about the interactions between customers and workers at Brookshire's Grocery Store. From the insider point-of-view of an office manager, the research involved examines why customers continue to return to Brookshire's as well as the texts involved in communication between workers, management, and customers.

Rosa Martin, “All the World is a Stage”

This project explores the conformity of high school students, concentrating on the interactions involved in a high school's One Act Play. It examines the literacies involved in integrating into this subculture, the further breaking-down of this small culture into even smaller groups, and the interactions involved between teachers, actors, audience members, and others involved in the production of a One Act Play.

Candace Mayes, “Text Importance in Church”

My project is over my church, and why the texts that are used in the church are important and how they are used. I plan on exploring particular choices in translations of the Bible, gospel music as text, church bulletins as informational texts, and different points-of-views ranging from elder members of the church to young worship leaders.

Olufemi Peter Onimole, “The Compensational Consultations of Lobby Life”

This paper discusses the interactions that take place in a dormitory lobby at TAMU-C, examining the student rituals that they enact and maintain in order to create a new “home” environment while maneuvering through the transitional process of students going away to college.

Bryan Whitaker, “Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children: Hospital and Playground”

I am researching the ways that the staff, patients, and volunteers work together to make this hospital such a great place for children. I will explore the spatial design of the environment, the cooperation between staff and medical staff, the texts and literacies involved, and the methods for making a charitable hospital successful.

Stephen Williams, “Defining the Literate”

This ethnography explores the lives of three men who have been labeled “illiterate” according to the traditional definition. This project questions current constructions of “literacy” as they apply to the success of people who, despite evidence that these men cannot read or write, are very successful when integrating into subcultures in the business world. It also demonstrates their particular practices in overcoming traditional literacy in non-traditional ways.

To understand the literacy crisis and imagine possible solutions, it is essential to examine the nature of literacy practice outside of school as well as within. (Resnick, qtd. in Carter 117).



INSTRUCTOR: JANE HOLCOMB

James Betterton, “Can You Hear It?”

Traces the sponsors of music literacy for three people and what those music literacies are.

DeAirion Brown, “The Literacies of Basketball”

An ethnography about literacy and how it relates to basketball. Through this project I discover that literacy is more than just having the ability to read and write.

LaKocia Byrd, “Good Child Care”

An ethnographic analysis of my job at Jane Jane’s Day Care, beginning with a description of each room and the curriculum in the room. I end with an extended discussion (based on interviews) about why most parents take their children to day care.

Chrisandra Cobbins, “The Flow of My Religion”

An ethnography about the C.O.G.I.C. Religion, especially the programs (with the order of services) and notes taken from the sermons. The artifacts included help show the literacy side of church and other places outside of a learning environment.

Danielle Cross, “Dorm: The Truth and Nothing But the Truth”

No abstract available.

Sara Erp, “The Work Behind Recreation”

My project tells about what a person has to know to work at the recreation center.”

Marari Garcia, “Cesar’s Tacos”

This is a project that describes a small restaurant in Dallas and compares the differences between a small traditional Mexican restaurant and fast-food restaurants.

Colin Green, “The New Sam Rayburn Student Center”

I will be describing my site of observation over the new student center and explain the things that are going into the building through completion of the New Sam Rayburn Student Center.

Torrie Guthrie, “Ethnography of a Car Dealership”

I researched a local dealership where I am from to find out if want to work in the car business when I graduate.

Jared Haughton, “Literacies on I-183A”

Project is over two specific individuals who work in the maintenance department on the I-183A Toll Road in Austin, Texas.

John Haubison, “Sheppard Heritage Homes”

It is an observational study of a small business. The business builds homes and my project explores the knowledge and literacies needed to build homes and run a small business in a competitive environment.

Joel Jopson, “To Greek or Not to Greek”

The everyday life of a fraternity, what they do, the history, people’s views, and the fraternity’s perspective and how it affects the campus.

Heather Kincaid, “Literacies in the Weight Room”

My project is going to show the several literacies that are necessary when working out in the Morris Recreation Center.

Ashley Kostra, “Do You Go to the Library?”

I did my project on the Rowlett Public Library, specifically the literacies involved in [navigating] the children’s section.

Laura Macalik, “Literacies in the Home”

I did my ethnography over literacies in the home. I focused on the origins of my parent’s skill sets.

Michael Nix, “Place to Race”

An ethnography about a drag strip (Redline Raceway in Caddo Mills, TX), explaining the basics of racing (racing as literacy)

Tameji Rhodes, “Inside Retail”

I observed my job and made it my project site to elaborate more on the position of a retail employee and tell about the things other than the typical things on the field.

Jarrett David Simmons, “Literacy within a Household”

In my ethnography, I compared two different households to see how your household can change your literacy experiences.”

Hayden Smith, “Three Churches”

My project compares three different churches and the literacy practices of each.

Darius Thomas, “The Literacy of Teaching Literacy.”

An ethnography on how literacy is sponsored and taught in the Writing Center.

Syvonne Terrell, “Prayer”

A style of prayer. Prayer has a literacy base and prayer can be a lifestyle.

Cairo Thornton, “A New Life”

My project/paper is basically about frats and sororities and how they act towards themselves and how they react towards negativity.

Starla Vasquez, “Cajun Spice: Waiting Tables at Razzoo’s Cajun Café”

My project is about some of the different literacies at my work and how some people are able to perform them.

Sarah Whitmire, “Literacies in the School Kitchen”

My project is about the literacies and requirements for working a school cafeteria. It also looks at how underappreciated the workers feel and why.

Ben Wise, "Different Types of Literacy in Café"

I will put on a show/presentation showcasing everything I learned. I shall have pictures and poster board and maybe some foods to interest.



INSTRUCTOR: JEREMY HURLEY

Gina Balthazar-"My Family"

Gathering different information about each family member helped me show that literacy is an important factor in my home.

Crystal Clem, "Small Town Financial Business"

My Project is informational, on working in a small town financial company.

Hollye Fisher-"Changes in First Grade"

My ethnographic study will highlight many of the changes that have occurred over the past twelve years in a first grade classroom.

Sunny Henderson-"The College Track Scene"

My goal is to show people all the different things that go on during a college track meet and how texts are everywhere.

Meagan Lasley-"The Cafeteria"

My project is about how all the different people and different literacies make up the cafeteria.

Candace Manning-"Life at the Memorial Student Center"

This paper is about what the university would be without the MSC and how we would function if that were to be true.

Heather McGettes-"Wal-Mart Shoppers"

My paper is about different types of people that shop at Wal-Mart and their different methods of getting their shopping done (shopping literacies).

John Pierce-"The Letter Society"

My project is about how fraternities and Greek organizations improve campus life and literacy.

Sarah A. Saktawi, "What goes on behind the doors of a fitness room"

My project is about observing the fitness or aerobic room at the MRC, by describing in detail what people do, see and hear and what are the different things they offer.

Lisa Simons-"A Place to Learn, A Place to Hang Out, A Place to Prosper: An Ethnographic Study of the Texas A&M-Commerce Agricultural Department"

The Agricultural department is more than a place; it is also a group of different and wonderful people.

Shawn Simmons-"The Recreation Center and the World Thereof"

An ethnography about the activities that take place in the rec center and how people/races act within those activities.

Craig Sokol-"Defining a Gentleman"

This project will show people (outsiders) what a fraternity is, what we do, and why we do those things in order to dissolve any negative stereotypes of our fraternity while describing some of our literature/literacies.

Ashley Strange, "Morris Recreation Center"

My project is about the overall rec center, what it looks like and the different activities available and the different groups that come into the rec center and how that could help the newcomers so they know where they might fit in.

Katy Trela-"Select Chorale in 3-D: An Ethnographic Study of Select Chorale in Spring 2007"

My project is about how the top choir is comprised of upperclassmen, underclassmen, vocal majors/minors, sopranos, altos, tenors and basses, and how all of these subdivisions work together to make music.

Robby Walters, "Listening to the Underground."

I mainly want to explore the stereotypes and opinions of people both inside and outside the underground music scene, both the good and bad sides of the spectrum.

Kassie Whitaker-"The Art World and its Literacy"

My project will show how images fit into three categories of Visual Texts and how my Figure Drawing class implements these texts to develop a literacy.

Nicole Williams-"Inside the Chili's"

My project is about making the customer-server relationship better through my research.



INSTRUCTOR: ANDI MILLER

Jerred Brown, "To Act or Not to Act"

My project is over the life of a theater major and how they apply to literacies in context--the different types of theater majors and what they have to do to prepare for a play.

Elizabeth Bialecki, "Hanging Out with Band Students"

I researched the University Band's Office, in hopes of showing how students involved with the band act and get along with each other, and to show what goes on in the band office.

Tredavius Birmingham, "Unique Techniques"

The ethnographic essay is about how the barbers in the shop interact on a daily basis with customers, also the texts that they use in their own subculture. The shop is a subculture within itself and I want to use that subculture and connect it to literacy.

Kyle Causey, "The Dollar and its Influence"

The importance of literacy include its role in the three main areas of the Dollar Store: the place itself, the employees, and the customers.

Rufino De Paz, “Maxi Video”

An ethnography about the role that a movie rental store plays in the community. It relates the store to the effect it has on people’s literacy habits. This project observes the importance that movies have on people who love to read and those who can’t.

Joby Edwards, “Radio in Commerce”

The first day I walked into the Performing Arts Center to see this little room that I am supposed to work on the radio in. My whole project is work at a small time to see how and why people want to do this for a living.

Cesar Faz, “Good Morning!”

My project is a study of Starbucks Coffee on Saturday mornings, one of the busiest times of the week, which indicates how hectic it gets—not bad but good, enjoyable, and fun.

Nicole Ferrazzoli, “Case of the Mondays”

People sit in classrooms and feel it is easy to be a teacher. My project shows just how much of an outsider we all are to the world of teaching.

Saul Flores, “Barbershop”

I’m studying how a whole community comes together in one place: the barbershop. Something about a barbershop is like therapy; this project will explore what that “something” might be.

Christopher Holt, “Nursing: ‘Is it Worth It?’”

Nurses go through a rigorous education in college. The nursing occupation requires the ability to work under pressure and the willingness to help someone in need.

Jennifer Jones, “Can Literacy Exist in a Salon?”

An ethnography about how literacy exists in a salon. I really didn’t pay attention to the literacy there at first, but in the long-run I found more than I expected. This essay is about how literacy affects the salon and its customers.

Katherine Phariss, “Emergency Room Panic”

An ethnography about an emergency room in Dallas. The goal of my paper was to influence others to understand two things: (1) that emergency rooms are not negative and (2) how important it is to understand patient files.

Matt Plummer, “The Battles of a Band: The Culture of the Music World”

Literacies and texts reach far beyond the pages of a book. In the world of music, bands utilize many different literacies to create the music that we enjoy.

As Mike Rose explains in *The Mind at Work: Valuing the Intelligence of the American Worker* (2005), when we dismiss the intelligence necessary to install a new toilet in an older home, color hair without drying it out, or effectively serve a restaurant full of hungry customers, we “develop limited educational programs and fail to make fresh and meaningful connections among disparate kinds of skill and knowledge” (216).

Shaan Singh, “Party at the Barn?”

In my ethnography, I discuss the Sigma Chi Fraternity at Texas A&M University-Commerce. The Sigma Chi barn is discussed, along with how this fraternity is connected to culture, the community, and literacy.

Erneshia Spencer, “Getting Fit is Easy to Do While in College!”

My project is about the Morris Recreational Center. In my project I plan on covering every aspect of the MRC. I plan on covering the different sections of the MRC and evaluating why people come to the MRC.

Marquis Stimpson, “Three Weeks with Morris”

The study of the literacy practices at the Morris Recreation Center and also the social life of it.

Lauren Stubbs, “Down on the Old Farm”

My site is at the Texas A&M-Commerce pig barn, which also has cattle and horses. Trying to let people understand what goes on in Agriculture and that farmers are usually very literate.

Brittany Thomas, “Sulpher Springs Fire Department”

Everyday firefighters risk their lives to save the lives of others. To do this they must spend twenty-four hours every three days at the fire station away from their families. This ethnographic project focuses on this important space.



INSTRUCTOR: LEANN NASH

Kyle Anderson, “Speaking Your Mind”

An ethnographic essay about what makes people come back to a certain place for important services (specifically, a diagnostic imaging service at Presbyterian Hospital)

Joseph Bell, “Inside the Mind”

I took a survey about how people of different races view a neutral character in a story in an attempt to determine whether or not readers ascribe race, ethnicity, or class to otherwise “neutral” characters.

Brittany Boykin, “Plentiful Markings”

An ethnographic essay about Shotgun Tattoo and Body Piercings in Rockwall, Texas, revealing that not all tattooed people/artists are scary and mean.

Dakota Burch, “Transitional Housing”

I’m talking about Transitional Housing, which is housing for people who are mentally ill. I will focus on the residents of a Transitional Housing complex owned by my father (in Dallas, Texas).

Justin Chisum, “Cultural Philosophies of Hindus at Smith Hall”

I have interviewed various Hindus at Smith Hall to gauge the philosophies of that culture.

Sharon Draginis, “A Question of Christianity”

A broad study of the definition of Christianity and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in particular.

James Harrison, “Different Strokes and Different Folks”

An ethnographic study of the pool hall in the MSC at A&M-Commerce, revealing that people who come from different backgrounds are united here by pool.

Tyler Lucas, “Serving the Customers”

An ethnographic essay about Brookshire’s in Sulpher Springs, Texas, that connects customer service directly to sales and the customers that we see.

Ashley Osborne, “Women’s Collegiate Soccer through a Player’s Eyes.”

The university soccer team and what practices, personalities, and other situations can affect the players on and off the field.

Timberly Royal, “Looking Through the Eyes of a Head Coach”

Basically trying to show that there is no difference between a man and woman head coach.

Alfredo Soto, “Coaching: Distance Runners”

This project is meant for me to observe the coaching and distance runners on the Texas A&M University-Commerce team. It’s to see how they work and how they are.

Melissa Smith, “LaQuinta . . . Spanish for Literacy.”

An ethnography about the literacies possessed by front desk clerks that guest most likely don’t know about. It also deals with what guests feel clerks should know that they don’t.

John Wallace, “The Secret Ingredient of a Chocolate Malt: History.”

An ethnography about the historic Soda Shop in Cooper, Texas that attempts to understand why it is still up and running after so many years.

Sean Williams, “A Look into the Past”

An ethnographic essay about Sandhills Golf Club in Greenville, Texas, and how it has changed over the years. It really parallels how the country has changed over the past fifty years.



INSTRUCTOR: TERRY PETERMAN

Nathan Abeyta, “The Vanishing Tattoo”

My observations will take place at Divera Dungeon Tattoo Studio in Greenville. Tattoos have a special significance to me, as they are an insight into people’s lives. Within this project I hope to get an insider view of the world of the tattoo artist. To learn why people still view tattoos as a criminal subculture even though millions of Americans are inked. I also hope to gain an artist perspective on what he tattoos onto people and why they choose this form of art.

Jeremy Anderson, “Literacies and Cultures of the Recreation Center”

My objective is to find different cultures in the recreation center. I hope to learn what these different cultures do in the “Rec” and learn the types of literacies that are there (if literacy is found there). I want to know people’s opinions about the Rec, what people dislike/like about the Rec, and how the Rec can affect people mentally and physically. One literacy that I’ve found is the tread mill machine. The tread

mill has many warning and “how to use” signs, which people will need to read and abide by. When you read, it’s easier to comprehend rather than not being able to read, and being illiterate.

Eugene Bangura, “Welcome to Your Friendly Bealls”

I choose Bealls Store #13 in Sulphur Springs. Believe it or not, a lot a great number of literacy events take place within the store. In my research I will show what types of literacy practices go on, from entering the store where some associate will greet you with the phrase, “Welcome to your friendly Bealls Store” to the very back of the store where all the paperwork is done and shoes, clothes, purses, jewelry, etc, are sorted out. I will also take a thorough view of each department and the functions that go on within it. Finally I will talk about the conscious and unconscious literacy events that go on. Artifacts will be a major part of my observation, from the packets of beads that are in the shoe boxes to that of the fitting rooms. My research is going to be excellent. I promise that.

Saronica Carter, “Late Night Creepers”

My project is about a specific section in Berry Hall. It goes into a deep description of the drama and mess and other things that go on when the sun goes down. It’s called “Late Night Creepers” because the site is only visited by many people at night (That’s when everything goes down). I tell about each person that visits the site, how they are, who they are, and what their purpose is. I describe the site from the ceiling to the floor, and I interact with the people in the site, being treated as an “insider.”

Wes English, “The Athletic Training”

I am observing the local athletic training room. I am going to ask the trainers many questions about their jobs and how they do what they do. I am going to ask the athletes how they feel about their trainers. I plan to show the public how much the world of athletics depends on trainers. There are two types of literacies found in the training room: medical terms and laymen’s terms.

Luis Gamez, “The Club Hill Affect”

I plan to determine how working at Club Hill Animal Clinic can affect all the different facets of an employee’s life, how the doctor feels about possible trends in employees, and why she thinks it is like that. I will also try and determine if there are any similarities between employees. Also, how some clients feel or are affected. I believe most employees have most of their lives affected. The fact that they know more about animals (cats and dogs specifically) they are somewhat obligated (in their mind) to enlighten people who may not know as much about animals do’s and don’ts, I believe it turns into somewhat of a lifestyle.

Gretna Harrison, “Theatre Three in Dallas”

Theatre Three is a theatre in Dallas, which is the center of this ethnographic study. It will explore the different parts and aspects of the theatre which includes the people, the construction of sets, money, and the atmosphere. I hope to use these different parts as an insider and as an outsider to accurately portray the theatre. I hope to prove that theatres and theaters are not the same and both can cater to the same audiences.

Debbie Harren, “What Goes on Within the Walls of Texas A&M University-Commerce”

What my paper is going to show is a full description of two offices in the Business Administration building at Texas A&M-Commerce. The reason why I have chosen this place is because I think it is important for people to know what goes on in the university to make sure that it keeps being successful. Another reason why I chose this place is because I work at this certain place and I think it’s a good job to have. Many people don’t understand all the computer skills (computer literacy) that an employee needs

to be successful at this job, and the good attitude that is needed to encourage the prospective student to choose this school.

Tiffany Herrera, “Taken from the Heart”

I am doing my ethnographic study over a photography place called Manesa’s. This place is run by a woman named Teresa. I found this place interesting because I’ve always loved being in pictures and also taking pictures of people. I hope to find out what it is like to have to snap pictures of something or someone everyday. I would also like to know what stresses come with it. I wonder what all cultures she deals with and what/if any education she has to have to do the work she does.

Ryan Hoisington, “Playing in the Mud”

An ethnography about the ceramics culture at Texas A&M-Commerce. I’m studying various techniques of different students as well as their crafting preferences and why. Also delving into how they got interested in ceramics and why they’ve decided to make a career out of it (professors and grad students) and where they plan on taking that career.

Zondra Hubbard, “Wintergreen Place”

Research over the reason people rent apartments, and the prices of certain apartments. Hope to prove it’s cheaper to own a home then to rent apartments.

Robert Kull, “The Different Types of Literacies at the MRS”

I am doing my ethnographic study over the Morris Recreation Center. I plan on showing people the different types of literacies that take part at the MRC. I am also going to describe the different types of people and different customers that are at the MRC. Some of the different types of literacies that take place that the “Rec” is the different signs and symbols you must know to enjoy your time at the Rec.

Natalie Malaslin, “Our Future: An Ethnographic Study of a Retirement Center”

I will be doing my research at the Colonial Lodge Retirement Facility in Greenville, Texas. The purpose of this project is to get a look at the day to day lives of the senior citizens living in the retirement facility and the people that work there.

Josue Marcias, “Cultural Division Among a Mexican Household”

My project will portray the house I live in as well as its surroundings, such as the neighbors. I chose my house because there usually is not one day that people do not visit. It is these people that have no relation to each other if it were not for my home. Most of the visitors happen to be Mexican. In class we talked about how culture was literacy. I want to see how they cope with the differences outside of the house, and how they behave inside. Do old traditions dominate their new life style and how much of American culture has affected them?

Shyra Montgomery, “Exploration of the Recreation Center”

I explored the recreation center where I learned alot of new things about the center. I learned alot of background information and alot about the people who come to the center. I learned enough to inform people about what goes on at the rec and I will try to encourage more people to attend.

Amanda Rios, “Americas War Heroes”

I’m doing my project at the VA hospital in Bonham. I’m talking with war veterans about their experiences and what war they served in. I hope to find out what branch of the military they served in and why they chose to do that area. What was their specific role/duty? I hope to prove that each of the

different branches of military require different literacy knowledge—ex-Air Force needs to know how to read the gauges on a plane and the Navy needs to know how to operate a boat, etc.

Keindra Scott, “Learning Your Way to Great Health”

My project is on doing fieldwork and research on the Rec center. The Recreational Facility is a great place to find literacy context and forms of sponsorship. From the people that are members of the center to the people that work there, they are all involved in or learning some type of literacy. The Rec Center holds a lot of literacy events: Karate classes, weight classes, and racquetball lessons. While presenting my project you will learn how the recreation center enhances your literacy level and how unknowingly we use them in our everyday lives.

Andrew Simpson, “Straight from the Horse’s Mouth.”

My site for this project is the Educational and Research Farm of Texas A&M-Commerce University. My goal is to tie the culture of the farm to that of not only Commerce but other East Texas towns. The educational farms main purpose is to prepare students to pursue a career in agriculture. I’m wanting to get an understanding of the life of a person that owns horses or cows. How does this benefit them personally, economically, etc. I hoping the educational farm proves very similar to that of the surrounding communities.

Elisaia Solomona, “The Texas A&M-Commerce Cafeteria”

My project will be based on the A&M-Commerce cafeteria that is currently run by a company called “Sodexo.” I will interview the people that work at the cafeteria and also the students who eat on a regular basis in the café. I am hoping any sorts of literacy practices that works do or any rituals to welcome a new employee. I am hoping to understand what students expect from the café, as concern to the food, the hours of the café, the services, etc



INSTRUCTOR: ROBIN PRESLEY

Mercedes Allen, “Shopping: Not for Dummies”

An ethnography about shopping, exploring the shopping culture, relationships, place, and habits (narrating shopping habits)

Alicia Jenne Brown, “Trashy Stories or Antiques?: You Decide”

The history and myths behind antiques and its stores.

Zachary Green, “When the Going Gets Rough, Log Off for Today”

Money, violence, video games, literacy, and the connections between them.

Cardaro Draymond Johnson, “A Forgotten Hero”

No abstract available.

Luis Juarez, “Cantera”

On where Cantera comes from and how it is used.

EJ Nauka, “Taekwondo”

No abstract available.

Meghana Patel, "Hastings Bookstore"

I am trying to observe a group of people at Hastings and asking questions of them. I want to know how they work as a group and how they share their feelings with each other.

Timothy Savala II, "Battlefield"

I am researching an online game as my site in order to discover if online gamers can be considered members in a subculture.

Anastazia Staples, "Promotion of Literacy through Gee Library"

Researching TAMU-Commerce's Gee Library to find people or objects that promote or contribute to literacy on campus.

Michelle Weld, "Voters"

Voters and voting styles, why some people will vote for reality style shows and then maybe are not interested in participating in political voting.

Tiffany White, "Lucille Ball: Her Life, Struggles, and Legacy"

No abstract available



INSTRUCTOR: DANIEL RAGUSA

Lacy Alexander, "Around the Caf in a Minute"

An ethnography about the cafeteria at A&M-Commerce and how people behave in the cafeteria.

Jennifer Alvarado, "Morris Recreation Center"

An ethnography about the Morris Recreation Center at A&M-Commerce.

Todd Avery, "Residence Hall vs. Home for Education"

An ethnography that attempts to determine whether it is better to live in a residence hall or at home during college.

Lyndsie Blake, "In the World of Warcraft"

An overview of what World of Warcraft is, what types of texts are used by the players, and what language is used. Also covers how people interact with other plays and what their techniques are of playing the game.

Candice Burden, "It's Not Just Good; It's Sonic Good!"

An ethnography about Sonic Drive In, including a brief discussion of its history. The project also includes the background of the Sonic Drive In in Leonard and offers a detailed description of what is done by the employees, customers, and the interaction between both.

Stacy Cooper, "Country Clubs: What Draws People to These Places?"

I wanted to find out why people are drawn to these places and hwy they are willing to pay so much money to play this sport.

Joshua Crutchfield, "Roles of the Lion's Mane Cafeteria"

An ethnography about the different roles of the cafeteria and the efficiency of these roles.

Geraldo DaLa Fuente, "Running for TAMU-C"

An ethnography of the men's distance group for the Texas A&M-Commerce track team. It involves practices and a detailed account of their daily routines.

Robert Fisher, "Ag Shop"

An ethnography about the ag shop at my high school that attempts to show what it takes to run an ag shop and what all goes into it.

Whitney Hancock, "The Morris Rec Center"

An ethnography about the Morris Recreation Center and how people act in it and their different routines.

Leticia Kelly, "A Sprinter's Track"

I am writing about the sprinters on the Texas A&M-Commerce track team. The mentality and language of these sprinters is my main focus.

Trevor Lenore, "Greek 100: Trying to Understand Greek Life"

An ethnography about the different Greek organizations on the A&M-Commerce campus and how they are structured, including the different community services in which they are involved. I will discuss the misconceptions about Greek life and the facts as well.

Nancy Lawrence, "The Texas A&M University Commerce Music Building: A Building of Success"

An ethnography about the music building that attempts to answer the question, "What does it take to be a successful music major?"

Lisa Mebane, "The Life of a Music Major: Is it Really Worth It?"

An ethnography about all the things music majors go through, including what it takes to be a music major and the many things they have to do to accomplish their goals. I pretty much just want to put the reader in the shoes of a music major.

Daniel Parish, "'We Shall Survive': A Look at CiCi's Pizza"

An ethnography about what makes a restaurant successful as determined through the eyes of the employees and guests.

David Waiyaki, "Single Mothers"

An ethnography about the life of single mothers. It talks about the hard and good times they go through in everyday life. I interviewed two mothers--one on campus and one a working mother. My project shows that being a single mother is a life-time career.

Ranshod Wilson, "The Locker Room"

An ethnography about the ins and outs of the Texas A&M-Commerce locker room, including what goes on there and what that might mean.



INSTRUCTOR: MARYANN WHITAKER

Lena M. Andrade, “A Regular Day in the Café”

An ethnography about how students function and interact in the Lion’s Mane.

Jaime Andres Cervantes, “A Coach’s Life”

An ethnography about a football coach’s life-- from everyday practice in season to offseason--along with the tools from today that coaches use today.

Chireen Bradshaw, “Your Life is a Figment of Your Imagination”

A study of how the literacies of imagination and make believe shape lives

Nathan Brown, “Sonic in Commerce”

A study of the workers on the grill at Sonic in Commerce, Texas.

Erica Bryant, “Law and Order”

My project is about my day in court (for her project, Erica shadowed an A&M-Commerce attorney); it also goes into the trail order and history of the criminal procedure.

Cayla Colby, “A Day in the Life of a Cattle Showman”

Description of what goes on at a show and what is required to get ready. Research Site: Houston Cattle Show (the “Superbowl” of cattle showing)

Andrew Gamboa, “Lion’s Football”

I will be discussing the game of football and talk about coaching the sport.

Sara Giunta, “Stepping into Uniform”

An ethnography about the American Taekwondo Association in Rockwall, Texas. Martial arts shown from a different perspective.

Keenan Handy, “Through My Eyes”

An ethnographic analysis of Commerce Eye Center in Commerce, Texas, focusing on what is involved in optometry and including an outsider’s view of performing their everyday tasks.

Dustin Havard, “QHS Tennis”

I’m researching Quinlan High School’s tennis team, mainly the coaches.

Kameron Henderson, “New Beginnings Gospel Choir”

No abstract.

Jerrod Hudson, “Spot Brewery—A Sports Bar”

My project will focus on how the community and customers view the bar and how this could or could not help us make decisions for the bar.

Valisha Jones, “Education in a Classroom”

Ethnographic study of students at A&M-Commerce training to become teachers (Research site: elementary education classroom at A&M-Commerce)

Elizabeth Marquez, “Princeton Police Department”

My portfolio is going to describe a typical day of a police officer in Princeton, Texas.

Robert Martinez, “Banking”

It is an ethnography over the People’s Bank of Paris, Texas. It analyzes the aspects of banking and what goes on in a bank.

Chris McCormick, “Bow Hunting”

A brief history and facts about hunting animals with a bow and arrow. Research site: a sports store that sells bow hunting equipment.

Ashley Murphy, “Fly on the Set”

“Fly on the Set” is an in-depth study of the private culture of the Texas A&M-Commerce filming crew.

Stephanie Norris, “Horse Show World: Western Pleasure.”

Description of one of the many classes offered at a Horse Show.

Chuck Okagbue, “A Coach’s Attribute”

My ethnographic study is about the day in and day out struggles and good times of a college football coach.

Josh Paroski, “The Drawing Power of the Lord’s House of Prayer”

In this project I am going to do a study on the drawing power of The Lord’s House of Prayer in Crandall, Texas, and note what makes people keep coming back and what is making it grow more and more and what those drawing characteristics are.

LaDecia Rorwett, “The Thinking Behind Inking”

My project is about tattoos—how they are done, safety procedures used (if they are safe or not), and why people get/don’t get them (Research Site: tattoo parlor in Dallas, TX)

Christina Rowland, “Taco Bell: What You Don’t Know”

I will inform people of Commerce about how their food is prepared and what goes into the business.

Julianna Scott, “Gee Library”

An ethnographic analysis of James Gee Library, specifically the Director’s Office and how the Director’s Office is a crucial part of the running of the institution.

Samantha Sisson, “Adopting Angels”

The inside views and joys of adopting an angel from your local animal shelters.

Deene Michelle Smith, "Funfetti Gifts: Behind the Fun"

My project basically describes what happens behind the scenes at Funfetti Gifts, a candy shop in Dallas, Texas. It details the workings, maintenance, and responsibilities of the owner and employees.

Rachael Story, "D Magazine"

My project is based on the makeup and production of *D Magazine*. This is based on my personal experiences at this site, the people that create this magazine, and the technical aspect of its production.

Krystal Teale, "The Other Side of the Desk" (Quinlan High School)

"The Other Side of the Desk" is an in depth study of a history teacher and his classroom at Quinlan High School in Quinlan, Texas.

Tiffany Thompson, "A Day at Earnests" (Shreveport, LA)

I describe a day at Earnest Orleans Restaurant, while briefly describing the customers, employees, owner, and Earnest himself.

Justin White, "Through the Eyes of a Musician"

My ethnographic research is based around the process of a musician recording music for the pleasure of others (Research site: Deep Ellum Recording Studios in Dallas, Texas)



INSTRUCTOR: CHARLES WHITE

Jason Dagenais, "Dallas School Literacies"

No abstract available.

Chance Foreman, "Underground: Reading Music Venues"

An ethnography about the scene of underground rock. I hit the main points about all of it, stretching as far as talking about the bands and what makes them "good" bands. Overall my paper covered more ground than I thought it would at first, but I believe it was necessary for it to be completely understood.

A. Knotts, "Commerce's Finest"

An ethnography about rappers in Commerce, focusing specifically on how they possess their own culture--from language to style to dress. Commerce Rappers have it harder because they are unknown to the general public, and it's harder for them to promote their music in order to get fans. They try to bring a different dialect into the community and start something new as in language and dance. I've experienced concerts in which the Commerce Finest participated and I noted how they got the crowd's participation or if they did as they were performing. Also I talked about how it's very important to be a good lyricist and know your craft (how the music game operates).

Josh Leftrick, "Sunday Morning at the M.L.K. Church of Christ"

My ethnography is about the study of Churches of Christ, specifically the Martin Luther King Church of Christ in Sulphur Springs. During this study I got an inside look of what the Church of Christ culture is like, what it stands for, how they conduct their worship. I did interviews with members and nonmembers to determine their points of view, including what the church means to them. I found out what makes this church differ from other churches. During this experience, I learned a lot.

Justin McCormick, "The Coffee House Culture of Starbucks"

An ethnography about the coffee house subculture that resides within Starbucks. Despite the fact that Starbucks has built its business under the structure of the fast food industry, it has retained, partly due to the very nature of coffee houses, a form of traditionalism.

Jenny McCreary, "Oasis: Mesquite Bible Church Youth Group"

This ethnography was about the different aspects of the group and the way the group interacted. I discussed leadership roles, the common factor of the group, and my personal experiences as a member, and now as an outsider, to this group. It was interesting to discuss this group with both points of view. The overall project has a positive feel and an importance, showing this group was an important part of my life.

Alex Null, "Gentleman or Phony?"

Fraternities are always considered the dumb drunk guys on college campus. But come to find out after much research and many interviews, the guys of Kappa Alpha fraternity are very smart; they do lots for the community and raise a lot of money for different charitable causes. On the other hand, what goes on behind closed doors is another story.

Eric Pleasant, "Punk Subculture in Mid 1980's Waco"

My ethnography is a study of the sub-subcultures of a small group of people in mid 80's Waco, Texas. This group of people had a culture that revolved around the punk "scene" at the time. I am looking at the similarities and differences of their backgrounds. This takes the form of a socio-economic profile based on surveys that were sent out to teach member of the group. Different aspects of their subculture are examined and contrasted, at times, to the larger subcultures around them. Finally, I am looking at their views now compared to their views in the mid 80's. The project concludes with their current relationship with each other and their opinion of how this group as affected them to date.

Heather Roberts, "A Window into the Food Chain"

My research project is over dining areas. Where before it was to be about fast food. I found it too narrow to write so extensively on. I wrote about my trips to McDonalds, Chicken Express, and Lonestar Pizza. My thoughts going in were to actually *see* things, not just get my food and go like I usually do. I wanted to find things that would support my hypothesis that restaurants use certain things/ways to attract certain types of people. I tried to include as much information about my experience as possible because so many people go to these places and never really notice what's going on around the.

Carmen Ramos, "The World of Resident Assistants: R.A. Literacies"

For my ethnographic research I observed student resident assistants (RAs) at this university. I examined how they worked in such a busy environment. I became familiar with how they interact with one another within their jobs. I found out that some of their duties do interfere with their studies and that their job is extremely time consuming. I was able to see the bigger picture of it all, how they work, how they handle their responsibilities, and how they respect everyone they encounter. Knowing this information allowed me to inform you about what an RA is, what they do, what is expected of them by the school, other RAs, and the student residents.

Ryan Scauzillo, "The Zookeeper Frontier"

This paper is written in the form of a documentary to an extent. The point of view is acute reversal of what you would see on Animal Plant. Instead of documenting and viewing animals it is

trainers and zookeepers. The paper is from six different locations of zoos and Sea World. The zoos include Dallas, Fort Worth, Caldwell, San Antonio, and Houston. It observations made at the zoo and how each task brings upon a characteristic like responsibility, patience, and pride. Along with these the impact of the animals on their every day lives. Overall, what was found was the zookeeping profession is a hard one but a rewarding one in the process.

Tyler Smith, "Literacy in the Church"

No abstract available.

Becky Wyatt, "Food Service Literacies"

No abstract available.

“All language use . . . is an invention of a particular social milieu, not a natural phenomenon” (21). In fact, “discourses operate at the hands and the will of a *people*, rather than instruments or forces of nature” (Royster 25, emphasis in original).



SOME GOOD NEWS FROM OUR FYC PROGRAM

First-Year Composition Researchers Make an Impact!

Rachael Story has been offered a summer internship at *D Magazine*! For her final project (an ethnographic analysis of literacy as it manifests itself in a particular context), she chose *D Magazine*, interviewed participants involved with this site, conducted several field observations, and otherwise got to know the people and skills involved with the technical aspect of the magazine’s production. Based on her experiences there, she’s been offered an internship! So proud! (Instructor: Maryann Whitaker)

For his final project, **Tyler Lucas** chose to examine “customer service” at the Brookshire’s in Sulphur Springs. He’s an employee there and found it interesting that so many people continue to shop at this location when their prices are consistently higher than the alternative in town (Wal Mart). He interviewed several customers and determined it was Brookshire’s particular brand of “customer service” that keeps them coming back.

The impact: Brookshire Grocery Company in Tyler (the headquarters) has requested a copy of his final project. (Instructor: LeAnn Nash)

At the Federation Rhetoric Symposium last February, **Stephen Williams** presented a paper (with Dr. Shannon Carter) based on the early results of his ethnographic research project: a study of how two, functionally illiterate (but smart and highly successful) men negotiated the paperwork required of their jobs—one a highly paid supervisor for a local company that installs and repairs telephone lines, the other a builder and co-owner of a very lucrative contracting company. (Instructor: Lauren Glenn)

Potential Publications by our FYC Students—

The nationally-recognized journal *Young Scholars in Writing: Undergraduate Research in Writing and Rhetoric* is part of a growing movement in composition studies to introduce students to what scholars are saying about them as writers and ask them to speak to (and perhaps against) these key arguments. By “publish[ing],” as the co-editors explain in the introductory issue (2003), “undergraduates’ interpretations of research in the field” (5), they have inspired others to begin treating undergraduate researchers as real scholars with something meaningful to contribute to the scholarly conversations in composition and rhetoric.

And as more and more undergraduate programs are developing writing majors (see “From Service Function to Discipline, Inside Higher Ed, March 23, 2007), the conversation in the writing community has begun to take a much closer look at this publication, even devoting a recent article in *College English* (Robillard, January 2006) and a CCCC panel (Salvatori et. al, March 2007) to the issues it raises and the ways in which its very existence should cause us to rethink citation practices, Institutional Review Board policies, and publication norms (especially multimodal texts and intellectual property rights).

A number of our students are considering submitting their final projects for publication in this journal. While I am a current member of the *Young Scholars in Writing* Editorial Board and co-editor of this new feature devoted to the scholarship of first-year composition students, I will, of course, recuse myself from any decisions regarding student submissions from A&M-Commerce; Dr. Downs will do the same for any submissions from his students at Utah Valley State University. See Call for Papers (CFP) below.

Young Scholars in Writing Announces New Feature in First-Year Composition

Young Scholars in Writing is seeking submissions for a new feature in First-Year Composition research. We seek excellent scholarship by first-year writers on topics tightly related to composition, rhetoric, and/or literacy studies. Research papers on topics unrelated to composition, rhetoric, and/or literacy studies will not be considered.

Submissions should be 5-15 pages in MLA format. Students should submit an electronic copy of their manuscript in Microsoft Word to First-Year Composition Editors Dr. Shannon Carter ([Shannon Carter at TAMU-Commerce.edu](mailto:Shannon.Carter@tamuc.edu)) or Dr. Doug Downs ([downsdo at uvsc.edu](mailto:downsdo@uvsc.edu)). Decisions will be made by the editors.

Students should include name, address, institutional affiliation, course name and number, email address, and phone number. All submissions must be accompanied by a professor's note that the essay was written by the student for a first-year writing course.

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A special thanks the instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages, whose hand work, sharp minds, and incredible patience inspired and guided the projects you see here

The curriculum serves students who seek rationales, rather than assertions, for the guidance and rules they encounter in writing; it is in fact an attempt to show students the rich knowledge that underlies their own instructors' approaches to and experiences with writing. It is, in short, a form of radical transparency and a logical move: in the same way "introduction to biology" overviews the state of knowledge in the field of biology with the promise of giving students a sense of how to "do" biology, "introduction to writing" uses the content knowledge of the field of Writing Studies to help students better understand how to "do" writing. (Downs, Wardle, and Yancey on "First-year Composition as Writing Studies: Implementing a Writing-about-Writing Pedagogy" [from previous draft of workshop proposal])

WORKSHOP AT THE 2008 CONFERENCE ON COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION (NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA)

Our work in English 102 this term builds from and contributes to a growing, movement in composition studies that treats First-Year Composition as an introduction to the field of writing studies—in much the same way that an introduction to biology course provides students with an introduction to the field of biology. Given that work and related conversations, I have been invited to join Kathleen Blake Yancey (current president of the National Council of Teachers of English and an extensively published and regularly-cited scholar in the field), and Doug Downs and Elizabeth Wardle (whose forthcoming *College Composition and Communication* article I cited in the introduction to this program) in a facilitating a full-day workshop on the subject at next year's Conference on College Composition and Communication, along with a handful of others piloting different versions of this pedagogy at campuses across the nation.

You can bet the 2007 Celebration of Student Writing will play a major role in my portion of this workshop, giving Texas A&M-Commerce even greater visibility in the national scholarly conversation. I am so proud of the work our students have done here; I hope you are too!

First-year Composition as Writing Studies: Implementing a Writing-about-Writing Pedagogy

In the past five years, a new FYC curriculum has been theorized, piloted, and is beginning to take hold in a variety of sites of composition instruction. Known as a “writing studies” or “writing about writing” curriculum, its premise is that teaching *about* writing and how writing works—that is, teaching the research-based content knowledge of our field—leads students to new understandings of what they are doing when they write and how to achieve what they want from their writing. Several versions of this curriculum exist, from those focused on student-inquiry projects into academic discourse (Downs) to those that center on literacies outside of school (Carter).

Regardless of the particulars of this curriculum, implementing it requires a shift in thinking—from simply teaching students *how to* write to considering as well how to teach students *about* writing. It also presents challenges new to many instructors: how to help students connect scholarly articles to their own experiences in order to make meaning of them; how to design assignment sequences that help students work from new knowledge to new activities such as actual scholarly inquiry; how to modulate their expectations for students' writing to match the complexity and newness of the work. Program administrators also often need to consider how to ensure that instructors teaching the curriculum themselves have sufficient background and knowledge of Writing Studies content to understand what their students need to know.

Assisting faculty and WPAs who want to make this curricular shift (as evidenced by attendance at both CCCC presentations and the related SIG) is a first goal of the workshop. A second goal is to help those desiring to implement a *program-wide* writing studies curriculum and who thus need assistance in designing faculty development activities and formulating rhetorical strategies for making this case to their home departments.

This full day workshop, delivered by faculty who themselves have pioneered the curriculum (Elizabeth Wardle, Doug Downs, Kathleen Blake Yancey, Debra Dew, Betsy Sargent, Barbara Bird,

Shannon Carter, and Suellynn Duffy), will engage participants in brainstorming approaches, designing syllabi and assignments, and drafting strategies for persuading administrators and faculty to adopt this approach. In addition, support for continuing collaboration beyond the workshop will be provided.

Workshop Schedule and Activities

- 9:00 I. (30 minutes) Doug Downs and Elizabeth Wardle
Primer on theoretical foundations and rationales of the curriculum.
- 9:30 II. (1 hour) Deb Dew, Shannon Carter, Barbara Bird, Suelleyyn Duffy, Elizabeth Wardle, Doug Downs
Roundtable of sample syllabi and course designs. Each facilitator will demonstrate their curriculum in 10 minute blocks, giving a basic outline of unique features and moderating questions and discussion on their curriculum and in comparison to others.
- 10:30 III. (1.5 hours) Deb Dew, Shannon Carter, Barbara Bird, Suelleyyn Duffy, Elizabeth Wardle, Doug Downs
Breakout groups (divide attendees by number of facilitators) for drafting and workshopping reading lists and assignment sequences in relation to participants' institutional, programmatic, and course outcomes. Participants will begin by articulating the outcomes for the FYC course in question, and then the group will consider readings, assignment designs, and assignment sequences that would use the writing studies curriculum to achieve those outcomes.
- 12:00 Lunch break (1 hour): optional one-on-one consultation between participants and facilitators
- 1:00 IV. (1.5 hours) Kathleen Blake Yancey, moderator
Feedback session: Participant reports to the workshop as a whole on potential readings and assignment sequences.
- 2:30 V. (1 hour) Deb Dew, Shannon Carter, Kathleen Blake Yancey, Elizabeth Wardle
Strategies for programmatic implementation: Instructor and TA preparation, building stakeholder buy-in, rhetorical strategies for communicating about the curriculum to other administrators and faculty. Facilitators with specific experiences will offer considerations for participants considering program-wide implementation.
- 3:30 (break)
- 3:45 VI. (1 hour) Deb Dew, Shannon Carter, Kathleen Blake Yancey, Elizabeth Wardle
Rotating breakout session where each facilitator works with participants on some administrative aspect of curriculum implementation: TA preparation (Carter), instructor preparation (Wardle), program building (Dew), rhetorical strategies for communicating with administrators (Yancey). Participants will work at the stations they are most interested in, drafting their own plans for that aspect. Participants will be able to rotate through up to four stations during the hour. Other facilitators will offer additional one-on-one consultation for participants not interested in matters of program-wide implementation.
- 4:45 VII. (15 minutes) Elizabeth Wardle
Wrapup, including offering listserv and SIG information, signup sheets for further info and contact, instructions for uploading syllabus designs to group site.

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<http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/litlang/CSC/index.htm>

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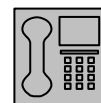
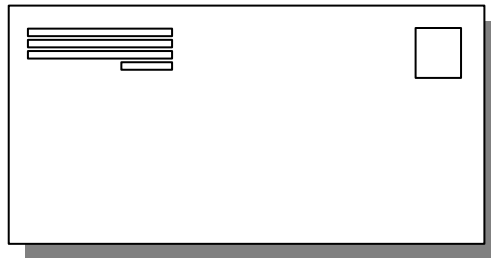
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Your feedback is appreciated. For comments/suggestions/questions, please contact Shannon Carter @ Shannon_Carter@tamu-commerce.edu.

Thank you for your continued support!