
English 569

Public Engagement, Rhetoric, and Placemaking

Spring 2020

Instructor: Candice Rai
Email: crai@uw.edu
Office Hours: by appointment via Zoom or phone

This graduate seminar is focused on public rhetoric and placemaking. Drawing on public and place-based rhetorical theory and methods, urban studies, environmental communication, and interdisciplinary community-based approaches, this course engages in questions of how “places” come to matter; how they accumulate meaning; how they perpetuate various forms of violence and inequity; and how they also provide opportunity for joy, connection, and transformation. We might easily replace the metaphor of place with other like concepts—say: ecology, public, environment, or community. While these concepts have different resonances that you might prefer (and we’ll explore all of them), our work with them will be expansive to include material, symbolic, embodied, human, and other-than-human stuff that coheres, connects, and divides, dynamically, emergently, and unevenly, within various places.

This course also taps into rhetoric's longstanding civic role of preparing individuals and communities to respond nimbly, creatively, effectively, and ethically to our most urgent public problems. Rhetoric—which is foundational to all communication—is an interdisciplinary public art that facilitates capacities for resilience, problem solving, and collective action. We will explore ways that rhetoric *as language* and *as ways of relating & being* (including discourse, symbols, performances, images, ideas, genres, ideologies, dynamics of built and natural environments, public forces and affects, flows of collective energy) becomes emplaced and entangled in the world and how rhetoric *as capacities of communication, connection, and action* can help us engage in just and ethical placemaking (or worldmaking) practices. Rhetoric in this sense always evokes place *and* capacities of placemaking.

As we work together, we will also consider the possibilities for public scholarship as a praxis that holds the potential to transform and expand traditional forms, audiences, and genres of scholarship and teaching; to open up who participates in producing scholarship and what knowledges, wisdoms, and experiences are valued; and to create more avenues for publication and circulation of diverse knowledges within and beyond the academy.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:

This course aims to help you:

- 1) explore various rhetorical and community-based theories/approaches to studying place and publics
- 2) develop tools to understand, analyze, ethically engage, and intervene in complex public problems;
- 3) build capacity for collaboration, problem-solving, and collective action across difference and in complex, fraught situations
- 4) consider the possibilities and liabilities of public scholarship and community-based pedagogies, as well as clarify your own commitments to engaging in public / community-based practices in the future.

Core Course Projects and Activities

Conversation Starters (15%)

Most weeks by Wednesday (or so), you'll craft informal responses (zero drafts) to our course readings and ongoing discussions. These responses are intended to help you prepare for class discussion and to provide a space for you to make meaning, ask questions, and gently explore threads. You are welcome to explore concepts that link to your interests; to start drafting course projects; to respond, critique, and extend the arguments you encounter; and so on. Your writing can dwell on a single quotation/ idea or weave together ideas from multiple readings. I'll always share framing questions, but **please** make these responses work for you. Please try to skim through your colleagues' responses as you can. **250 words or so. Post on Canvas Discussion Board.**

Writing Praxes Experiments (20%)

Most weeks by Sunday (or so), you'll participate in various research praxes that activate the theories and approaches from the readings. Some of these are analysis guided by theory, others prompt you to practice some field work/take field notes (we'll keep social distancing and your comfort in mind). For each, I'll offer structured prompts, but there will be plenty of room to shape these in ways that allow you to craft and curate writing towards your final project(s) and go in your own direction. **500-750 words or so. Post on Discussion Board by Sunday; respond to a few of your colleagues by Wednesday or so.**

Final Project Proposals and Prototypes (20%)

Because you'll be designing your own final project(s), some of which might be collaborative, there will be some formal stopping points for us to (re)articulate and (re)visit your project aims and goals, scale up/down, and give/receive feedback. While you are absolutely welcome to chart traditional academic genres for your work (e.g., one final seminar paper), I encourage you to consider alternative projects alongside or in addition to academic essays as you'd like. These stopping points will include:

- 1) **project proposals** (a tentative sketch of initial goals, aims, tasks, genres, outcomes, and audiences);
- 2) **prototype #1** (this'll vary based on your project(s), but it's a moment for you to share a draft, notes, an outline, etc. of your work-in-progress for feedback, resource sharing, and generative brainstorming;
- 3) **prototype #2** (by now, you should have a clearer sense of your final project(s)-still-in-progress, so this stopping point is a time for workshopping, driven your needs and questions.

Final Curated Portfolio of Your Projects (35%)

Your portfolios and final project(s) will vary to serve your own needs. Your portfolio will showcase your more polished research and writing projects that emerge from the course, but it can also serve as a place for you to reflect on what you have learned; to articulate for yourself the public relevancy of your own work and work of the Humanities (or your home fields); to offer forward-looking reflection on how you might translate the skills and capacities learned in this course to other contexts; and to articulate plans for how you might incorporate public scholarship and community-based pedagogy into your existing or future research and career plans. Your portfolio might have a public dimension (such as a professional website that articulates your research or teaching in terms of public scholarship) and/or

more polished works in progress. Many of you might include “backstage” parts of your portfolio for you (such as curated links, bibliographies, resources, your field notes and research protocols, sketches, photos, sound recordings, model public scholarship projects, sample syllabi from you or others, videos, ideas for future research, inspirational projects, and so on). Your polished writing in progress could include a traditional academic research paper, public scholarship writing/research/projects (or drafts or plans for such work), a working syllabus for public or community-based work, a research design for a future project, interview protocols, framing statements on your work as a public scholar. The above project proposal and prototypes offer an opportunity for you to design and carry out (or in some cases just gather ideas and proposal for future) projects that make most sense to you and to decide for yourselves the goals and aims of your final portfolio/projects.

Presentations (10%)

We will end the course with individual or group presentation of your research and writing projects that connect to threads we discussed in the course and beyond.

Course Texts

All of our course texts can be found in our Canvas site: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1372382>.

Course Policies

There is nothing at all normal about these times. Our lives have been disrupted. I hope, more than anything, that we can embrace a disposition of care (for one another and ourselves). This might mean skimming reading faster than you might like sometimes or limiting the time you spend on writing. It might mean letting go of some goals and lowering or shifting expectations. This is all OK.

With the above as our guide, I encourage you to stay as much as you can with a pace that works for you. Please do your best to attend discussion sessions and do some of most readings. Keep up on low stakes writing but set timers or let them vary in polish and form (30 minutes of more polished writing one day=great. 15 minutes of zero draft on compelling threads on another day=stellar. 10 minutes to offer two quotes that strike you with a question or two you’re pondering=perfect.)

Work ahead when you have energy on the conversation starters or circle back to one after a discussion

More firm-ish deadlines = final project(s) (proposal, prototype #1 and #2, final portfolio/projects) and responses to your colleagues. Even for these: just stay in touch and we’ll all flow as we can. It is all OK.

Schedule Overview

Week One—On Public Scholarship, Publics, and Public Rhetoric—March 30-April 3

Readings:

Bartha, Miriam. "Serious Work: Public Engagement and the Humanities." *Western Humanities Review*.

Bartha, Miriam and Bruce Burgett. "Why Public Scholarship Matters for Graduate Education." *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 15.1 (2014): 31-43.

CCCC Statement on Community-Engaged Projects

Santiago-Ortiz, Aurora. "From Critical to Decolonizing Service-Learning: Limits and Possibilities of Social Justice-Based Approaches to Community Service-Learning." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*. Winter 2019: 43-54.

Mattern, Shannon. "Identifying Your Interests and Establishing a Research Plan." *Words in Space*.

TallBear, Kim. "Standing with and Speaking as Faith: A Feminist-indigenous Approach to Inquiry." *Journal of Research Practice*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2014, article N17.

Writing:

Conversation Starter by Wednesday, April 1 – On Public Scholarship and Ethical Research

Praxes Writing Experiment by Sun, April 5 –Public Orientations/Commitments; Project Seeds.

Week Two—Conceptions of the Public, (Public) Rhetoric, and Public Engagement—April 6-10

Readings:

Asen. Robert "Neoliberalism, the Public Sphere, and a Public Good." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 103 (2017): 329-349.

Chávez, Karma. "Counter-Public Enclaves and Understanding the Function of Rhetoric in Social Movement Coalition-Building." *Communication Quarterly*. 59:1. 1-18.

Gottschalk Druschke, Caroline. "Watershed as Common-Place: Communicating for Conservation at the Watershed Scale." *Environmental Communication*. 7.1 (2013): 80-96.

Grabill, Jeffrey T. "On Being Useful: Rhetoric and the Work of Engagement." *The Public Work of Rhetoric: Citizen-Scholars and Civic Engagement*. Eds. John M. Ackerman and David J Coogan. The U of Southern Carolina P, 2010: 193-208.

Rai, Candice. "Introduction." *Democracy's Lot: Rhetorics, Publics, and the Places of Invention*. U of Alabama P, 2016 **NOTE: Pages 1-21 only.**

Writing:

Conversation Starter by Wednesday, April 8 – On Definitions of Publics/Public Rhetoric

Praxes Writing Due by Sunday, April 12

Week Three—Rhetorics of Race and Racisms in Public Discourse—April 13-17

We will be joined by Professor LeMesurier on Thursday via Zoom.

Readings:

Flores, Lisa. "Stoppage and the Racialized Rhetorics of Mobility." *Western Journal of Communication*. (2020): 1-17.

LeMesurier, Jennifer. "Uptaking Race: Genre, MSG, and Chinese Dinner." *Poro* 12.2 (2017).

Mao, LuMing. "From Classroom to Community: Chinese American Rhetoric on the Ground." *Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie: The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric*. Utah State UP, 2006: 123-143.

Writing:

Conversation Starter by Wednesday, April 15

Final Project(s) Proposal Due by Sunday, April 19

Week Four—Approaches to Space/Place and Placemaking—April 20-24

Readings:

Ackerman, John. "Walking in the City: The Arrival of the Rhetorical Subject." *Tracing Rhetoric and Material Life*. Palgrave Press, 2018.

Reynolds, Nedra. *Geographies of Writing: Inhabiting Places and Encountering Difference*. Intro and chapter 1. Southern Illinois UP, 2004.

Terese Guinsatao Monberg. "Like the Molave: Listening for Constellations of Community through 'Growing Up Brown' Stories." *Enculturation* 20 April 2016. <http://enculturation.net/like-the-molave>

Supplementary texts:

Misra, Ranvi. ["The "Atlas of Inequality" Maps Micro-level Segregation"](#) *CityLab*. 2019

Solnit, Rebecca. *Infinite Cities*. Selections.

["Truth on a Map: How Mapping Health Disparities by Neighborhood Helped Communities in King County WA, Mobilize for Change."](#)

Writing:

Conversation Starter by Wednesday, April 22

No Writing due on Sunday so you can focus on your Final Project(s) Prototype Due next week

Week Five – Community-based, Collaborative Research Approaches—April 27-May 1

We will be joined by Professors Gonzalez and Shivers-McNair via Zoom on Thursday.

Readings:

Gonzales, Laura. *Sites of Translation: What Multilinguals Can Teach us about Digital Writing and Rhetoric*. Sweetland Digital Rhetoric Collaborative. U of Michigan P, 2018: Intro, 5, 7.

Shivers-McNair, Ann, and Clarissa San Diego. "Localizing Communities, Goals, Communication, and Inclusion: A Collaborative Approach." *Technical Communication* 64. 2 (May 2017): 97-112

Shivers-McNair, Ann, Laura Gonzales, and Tetyana Zhyvotovska. "An Intersectional Technofeminist Framework for Community-Driven Technology Innovation." *Computers and Composition* 51 (2019): 43-54.

Writings

Conversation Starter by Wednesday, April 29

Final Project(s) Prototype #1 by Sunday, May 3

Week Six— Studying Place, Embodiment, Affect, Memory, Ephemera—May 4-8**Readings:**

Creswell, Tim "Writing Place." *Maxwell Street: Writing and Thinking Place*. University of Chicago Press, 2019.

Muñoz, José Esteban. "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts." *Women & Performance: a Journal of Feminist Theory* 8.2 (1996): 5-16.

Springgay, Stephanie and Truman, Sarah. *Walking Methodologies in a More-than-Human Walking Lab*. New York: Routledge, 2018. Introduction and Chapter 8.

Stewart, Kathleen. "Atmospheric Attunements." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29 (2011): 445-453.

Supplementary texts:

Becoming Sensor in Sentient Worlds and Ungrid-able Ecologies

Writing:

Conversation Starter by Wednesday, May 6

No Writing due on Sunday

Week Seven—Community-based Methods and Teaching —May 11-15

Reading:

Jackson, Rachel and Dorothy Whitehouse DeLaune. "Decolonizing Community Writing with Community Listening: Story, Transrhetorical Resistance, and Indigenous Cultural Literacy Activism." *Community Literacy Journal* 13.1 (2018): 37-54.

Peters, Jason. "Public Art as Social Infrastructure: Methods for Social Action at Environmentally Contaminated Sites." *Reflections* 19.2 (2020): 106-129.

Poudyal, Bibhushana, and Laura Gonzales. "'So you want to Build a Digital Archive?' A Dialogue on Critical Digital Humanities Graduate Pedagogy." *The Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy*, 15 (May 2019): <https://jitp.commons.gc.cuny.edu/so-you-want-to-build-a-digital-archive-a-dialogue-on-critical-digital-humanities-graduate-pedagogy/>

Writing:

Conversation Starter by Wednesday, May 13

No writing on Sunday, please work on your final project(s), prototype #2 due next week

Week Eight— New Materialisms and Ecological Approaches—May 18-22

Reading:

Clary-Lemon, Jennifer. "Gifts, Ancestors, and Relations: Notes Towards an Indigenous New Materialism." *Enculturation*. Nov. 2019.

Boyle, Casey. "Chapter 1: Rhetorical Ecologies of Posthuman Practice." *Rhetoric as Posthuman Practice*. Ohio State UP, 2018: 27-59.

DeVasto, Danielle, S. Scott Graham, Daniel Card, and Molly Kessler. "Interventional Systems Ethnography and Intersecting Injustices." *Community Literacy Journal* 14.1 (2019): 44-64.

McGreavy, Bridie, et al. "Belonging to the World: Rhetorical Fieldwork as Mundane Aesthetic." *Field Rhetoric: Ethnography, Ecology, and Engagement in the Places of Persuasion*. U of Alabama Press, 2018: 148-170.

Writing:

Conversation Starter by Wednesday, May 20

Project(s) Prototype #2 by Sunday, May 24

Week Nine—Public Scholarship/Community-based teaching/ Project Workshops —May 25-29

Projects Workshops/Conferences re: Final Projects

Guest Presenters on Public Scholarship and Community-based Teaching

Week Ten— Presentations, Portfolios, and Reflecting on our experiences—June 1-5

Week Eleven— Finals Week, No Class Meetings

Final Projects by Thursday, June 12 anytime via Canvas

English 569

Public Engagement, Rhetoric, and Placemaking

Final Project(s)/Portfolio Proposal

This proposal provide space for you to design your project(s) and establish some flexible goals, deadlines, and workplans. Feel free to draw directly from the writing you've already done. You're experimenting and might need to scale back or change course throughout the quarter. That's perfect.

I'd recommend revisiting some of the [portfolios for the Simpson Center alum of the Certificate in Public Scholarship](#). This might offer some inspiration for how to frame or organize your work into a portfolio.

Project(s) Descriptions (1000 words or so)

Describe the project(s) you hope to complete this quarter. I offer some guiding questions below; feel free to take up the ones that resonate with you or to go in other directions:

- **Purpose/Aims:** What do you hope to achieve/do/make? What are the aims, goals, and key questions/commitments that underscore your project(s)? What projects, formal or informal, might you include in your final portfolio? How, do you understand your proposed work as public scholarship or engagement, community-based work, or another like term?
- **Exigence/Personal Investments:** Why is your project needed now? How is it timely or urgent? What are the stakes of your proposed work for you and others?
- **Audience:** What are the various potential audiences for your work? What audiences do you seek to reach/collaborate with? How might you need to translate your project/research/work across your various audiences?
- **Genres/Forms/Modes of Circulation/Labors:** What forms and genres will your project(s) take? How do you plan to share your work with us and others? What are the ideal ways to circulate your various projects to your intended audiences? What parts of your work will be public-facing and what parts will be planning/concepts/notes/reflective writing/speculation/curations /sketches or other backstage labors just for you for now (but that might be included in a final portfolio)? What artifacts do you want to gather or create? What other labors do you imagine engaging in (talking with people, various forms of research, fieldwork, notetaking, reading, photographing, observations, sketches, etc.)?
- **Impact/Outcomes/Contributions/Links to Disciplines:** What do you hope will be the impact/ outcome of your project(s)? Who might find your projects/artifacts meaningful or useful? What scholarly literatures, archives, community wisdoms, and so on inspire you or do you plan to draw on and how will you contribute to scholarly conversations in your field, various publics, and/or communities you might engage?
- **Ethical considerations:** What ethical considerations do you think you might need to navigate in your work and what plans do you have for negotiating them at this point? What are the

potential harms of your projects/collaborations and what can you do to mitigate them? How might your work be designed to be more reciprocal and ethical?

If you have a series of somewhat disconnected projects, you might answer these questions for each and also seek to explore any overarching narratives or investments that tie together the projects for you.

Workplan/Timeline/Activities (One-two page sketch or so)

Because you'll be designing your own final project(s), there will be two formal stopping points before the final submission for you to (re)articulate and (re)visit your project aims and goals, scale up/down, and give/receive feedback. These stopping points will include **two prototypes** (May 3 and 24) shared with me and your collaborative team. The prototypes can be thought of as traditional drafts of a paper (or such) or true prototypes in which you test concepts or designs that you might scrap or rethink later.

For this section:

- **How might you break your proposed project(s) into concrete tasks and activities?** What labors, writing, curation, research, etc. do you expect to need to do for the various project(s)? This might include gathering archives, organizing a google drive, drawing and storyboarding a zine, talking to others, interviewing, drafting interview questions, writing, analyzing texts, tinkering with a website, reflective notes/jottings, field work/notes, or anything else under the sun.
- **What do you hope to submit for Prototype 1 (May 3) and Prototype 2 (May 24)? What are all the items you might complete for your final portfolio (June 12)?** Here, please list or describe the concrete things you hope to have completed at these points in the quarter.
- **What is your timeline for completing various parts of your project?**

Informal Notes to Me & Your Colleagues

Please let us know how we can be most useful. Are there resources we can help you find? Questions you'd like us to think through alongside you? Things you are unsure about? Would you like us to generate ideas with you on a thing? Just let us know and we'll do our best.

Prototype(s) One Due Sunday, May 3

Share what you have with me and colleagues in your collaborative team.

What should you share? This'll vary. In your original proposal you set a workplan, goals, and timeline. In an ideal world you would provide an update, a bit of framing, and some drafted artifacts for us to review and workshop with you based on the proposal. But I'm 100% sure things will have changed for many of you. That is all totally fine. Work at your own pace and with your own energy. Keeping that in mind, here are **some guidelines for what you might include:**

- **Update for us** as an informal brief statement: Where do you stand in completing your project? What have you done, what have you shared, what remains? What have you learned and discovered that you'd love to share? How have your broader project(s) or aims changed, if relevant? What have you shared with us for your prototype(s) and how does your prototype fit into your broader final project plans? What are the aims, audiences, and core questions/goals of your prototype? What would you like feedback on? What questions do you have for us?

- **Prototype(s).** Please share the prototype(s). These might include drafts in progress, archives with framing, drawings, artist statements, bibliographies, interview protocols, research notes, maps, curation of others' work that is inspirational with framing on why you value the work and how it might inform your own work, informal reflections, a hodge-podge of this and that with some framing, concepts to test, prototype or sketch of a website, or anything else.

How should you share your update/ prototypes? Depends. If you have an archive of multiple materials/artifacts/stuff, you might want to create a portfolio on Google or Canvas or maybe a google drive with folders to house/organize items and then send us a link. Some of you might be working on a prototype of a professional website. Or something else entirely. Up to you. Some of you might have just a single word doc or PDF. Up to you. These will be shared via Canvas peer review which you can find a link to on the relevant course module.

What are my responsibilities to colleagues in my collaborative team? Minimally, I would like everyone to offer some written feedback/resources via Canvas for the two other members of your team within a week or so of the deadline. Up to you if you want to gather or collaborate further.

Prototype(s) Two Due Sunday, May 24

Repeat the above.

Only shift is that you'll be further along.

This will be the last round of feedback from your collaborative team, unless you choose to share your work with your colleagues.

Final Portfolio of Project(s) Due Thursday, June 12

Your portfolios and final project(s) will vary, but will likely showcase your more polished public-facing projects that you designed (such as academic essays, websites, research protocols, research statements, public bibliographies, etc.), as well any backstage labors you've engaged in (such as curated links, resources, field notes, sketches, photos, sound recordings, list of models public scholarship, sample syllabi from you or others, videos, ideas for future research, reflective writing and so on).

We'll be working one-on-one to figure out how to organize and delivery your portfolio. Some may simply be a PDF with an essay and framing statement; others might create a google folder with many artifacts, a website, or a google/Canvas portfolio. It is up to you, really.

Framing statement (2-3 pages, single-spaced)

In addition to the various public and "backstage" artifacts in your portfolio, please craft an overarching framing statement that introduces your portfolio and its contents, what your aims/audiences are, how you might further develop your work in the future, and how you are defining and situating yourself in conversations about public scholarship. This statement is a place for you to reflect on what you have learned; to articulate for yourself the public relevancy of your own work and work of the Humanities (or your home fields). This can be brief or more extended depending on your own goals. In addition to introducing your portfolio, such a statement could serve as material you can draw on for future professional statements, job letters, scholarship/grant applications and so on.

Depending on your project/portfolio design, individual parts of your portfolio might have additional brief framing / artists statements to explain the project.

Please submit your portfolio, including framing statement and projects via Canvas.

I'll offer feedback and responses to your final portfolio. You are welcome to share with your team or the entire class if you'd like. Up to you.