Western States Rhetoric and Literacy Conference

Literacies and Rhetorics of Crisis
November 7-8, 2014
University of Nevada, Reno

Friday, November 7th

8:30-9:00 Coffee at Theatre, Joe Crowley Student Union, 3rd Floor

9:00-10:15 Welcome and Keynote at Theatre Joe Crowley Student Union, 3rd Floor

“Crisis after Crisis: The Rhetoric of Illiteracy and Its Consequences”
Peter Mortensen, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

In recent decades, numerous public figures as ideologically diverse as Jonathan Kozol and George W. Bush have declared that a “literacy crisis” threatens to shred the nation’s social fabric and sap its economic vitality. In response, a multitude of institutions, public and private, have mobilized to wage a “war on illiteracy.” Among these institutions, universities have been no exception. But within universities, we who study composition, rhetoric, and literacy have been wary. We question claims of a crisis and dismiss the call to arms. The proposition that literacy is destiny? That’s a myth we say, pointing to powerful interests that have a stake in the myth’s perpetuation. But in mounting our critique, we share a stake in the myth—a stake worth examining. My examination begins with Robert Connors’s assertion that “the first media-driven ‘literacy crisis’” in the 1890s “produced the freshman composition course as one of its answers.” This assertion is offered as if the media manufactured the crisis, with no basis in lived reality. New studies of macroeconomic trends at the turn of the twentieth century suggest otherwise. I argue for incorporating these studies into our thinking about the recurrence of literacy crises on the American scene so that we might better understand the rhetoric of illiteracy and its consequences.

Session I 10:30- 12:00

1a. New Perspectives on Literacy Crisis and Writing Program Administration Room 320

- “Student Veterans and Composition/Rhetoric: A Historical Perspective on the Generative Possibilities of the “Crisis” of Changing Student Demographics” Ashley Ludewig, Southern Illinois University
- “Why Johnny Can’t…”: Academic and Professional Literacy Crisis Narratives as Markers of Discipline-Specific Rhetorics” Elizabeth G. Allan, Oakland University
- “Ditching WPA Crisis Rhetoric for an Ecological Feminist Orientation towards Change” Kate Ryan, Montana State University

Chair: Meghan Sweeney, University of Nevada, Reno
1b. Reframing Discourses of Empowerment and Crisis with Women Refugees and Prisoners Room 420

- “Recasting the Blame-Game: Women’s Empowerment and Refugee Resettlement”
  Elenore Long, Arizona State University
- “When Orange is just Orange: Women’s Writing in Prison”
  Tobi Jacobi, Colorado State University
  Madelyn Tucker, University of Arizona

Chair: Drake Gossi, University of Nevada Reno

1c. Composing Publics at the Intersection of Educational and Cultural Crises Room 323

- “How Do We Enact Pragmatism?: An Evaluation of Reframing as Composition’s Tactic for ‘Going Public’ in an Era of Reform”
  Jim Webber, University of Nevada Reno
- “Meaningful Development: Transformative Publics in the Crisis of Place”
  Ian Campbell, Western Washington University
- “Taking the Long View: A Rhetorical Look at Productivity, Sustainability and Resilience”
  Lonni Pearce, University of Colorado at Boulder
- “FYC Pedagogy and the Subject of Crisis: Fostering Rhetorical Agency through Inquiry”
  Shannon Kelly and Kaitlyn Teer, Western Washington University

Chair: Sarah Perrault, University of California Davis

1d. Public Memory, Rhetoric, and Violence Room 324

- “Wielding the Tongue and the Pen’: Female Exploitation of Crisis in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries”
  Shersta Chabot, Arizona State University
- “Micro/Macro Crisis in Police Use-of-Force Policy”
  Michael Knievel, University of Wyoming
- “Crisis upon Crisis: Failed Awareness of White Privilege in a City Trying to Come to Terms with its Racist Past”
  Elizabethada Wright, University of Minnesota Duluth
- “Rethinking Sixties Rhetorics: Black Power and the Weather Underground”
  Brad Lucas, Texas Christian University

Chair: Maureen Mathison, University of Utah

1e. Rhetoric and Environmental Crisis: Risks and Responsibilities Room 317

- “The Green Church: Ecotheology and Eco-christianity as a Response to Climate Crisis”
  Elizabeth Lowry, Arizona State University
- “Of Monsters and Men: Constructing a Mythology of Radiation and Risk”
  Erin Goldin, University of Nevada Reno
• “A Question of Exigence: Navajo Negotiation of Critical Water Rights” Sally E. Said, University of the Incarnate Word
• “Authoring a World beyond Climate Change Catastrophe: Figured Worlds in the Transition Town Movement” Gerri McNenny and Jan Osborn, Chapman University

Chair: Matthew McKinney, University of Nevada, Reno

Lunch Break 12:00-1:30

Session II 1:30-3:00

2a. The Productive Potential of Conflict: Regional Literacies and Social Change Room 317

• “All You Need Is a Pencil to Get In Here: Writing At an Open Enrollment University” Wioleta Fedeczko, Utah Valley University
• “Crisis and Community: Audience Invocation in Response to the Closure of Dana College” Amanda Sladek, University of Kansas
• “Preservation of ‘the Passing Era’: The Productive Potential of Rhetorics of Crisis for Rural Writers” Nancy Reddy, University of Wisconsin-Madison
• “Recalcitrance: Burkean Dialectics in the Writing Space” Jacqueline Preston, Utah Valley University

Chair: Maureen McBride, University of Nevada Reno

2b: A Crisis in English Studies? Says Who? Room 420

• “Crisis Discourse: Why Some Students Won't Participate in Discussion,” Emily King, California State University Fullerton
• “Cross-pollinating Binaries, or an Appeal for Holistic Composition,” Elle Mooney, California State University, Fullerton
• “Student Perceptions of English Studies and Engagement: Towards an English Studies 'Made Whole'?" Dr. Martha Webber, California State University Fullerton

Chair: Crystal Colombini, University of Texas San Antonio

2c. Cycles of Crisis in the Discipline and the University Room 324

• “Looking for Logic: Rhetoric and Literary Studies at the University of Chicago” Dr. James Beasley, University of North Florida
• “Crisis in Communication: Tenets, Conventions, and Life after Upper-Division Writing” Maureen A. Mathison, University of Utah
• “Disaster Economies: Crisis, Capitalism, and Contingency” Sheri Rysdam, Utah Valley University
• “‘The Melting of the Ethnics’: Multilingualism in American Composition Rhetoric through History” Holli Downs, Texas Woman’s University

Chair: Melissa Nicolas, University of Nevada Reno

2d. **New Media, New Modes, and the Crisis of Digital Agency** Room 323

- “New Media’s Crisis of Presence,” Marsha Maxwell, University of Utah
- “Tweeting Student Agency: Using Social Media to Respond to the “Crisis” of Multilingual Student Literacy,” Emily Simnitt, Boise State University
- “Don’t Fear the Reaper: Beyond the Specter of Internet Plagiarism,” Stephanie Vie, University of Central Florida
- “The Future Historical: Democratic Deliberation and the Uses of Public Opinion Polling,” Adam Ellwanger, University of Houston-Downtown

Chair: Phil Goodwin, University of Nevada Reno

2e. **Rhetorical Responses to Crisis: Lessons Learned from Large Organizations** Room 320

- “When a Dream Becomes a Nightmare: Image Repair Analysis of Boeing’s 787 Dreamliner,” Adam Bair, Utah State University
- “BPI and Pink Slime: Rhetoric of Image Crisis,” Breeanne Martin, Utah State University
- “Explaining the Crisis: The 2014 Ebola Outbreak and the CDC’s Changing Frontier Mission,” Jason Ludden, University of Nevada Reno

Chair: Keith Grant-Davie, Utah State University

**Session III 3:15-4:45pm**

3a: **The Generative and Destructive Risks of Enacting Agency** Room 420

- “Girl Gamers: The Risk of Claiming a New Identity,” Jessica Ross, University of Nevada Reno
- “Cyber Battling the Virgin Mary: Freethinking Mothers’ Emergence from the Periphery,” Lindsey Macdonald, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- “Reading at Risk: A Qualitative Exploration of the Role of Agency,” Meghan Sweeney, University of Nevada Reno
- “Negotiating the Risks of Agency in Peer-to-Peer Interactions,” Maureen McBride, University of Nevada Reno

Chair: Phil Lovas, University of Nevada Reno

3b: **Constructing Crisis: Discourses of Crisis and Victimhood in (Trans)national Encounters** Room 324
• “Punitive Humanitarianism: The 2010 Haitian Earthquake and a Crisis of Law” Chris Earle, University of Wisconsin-Madison
• “A Crisis of Whiteness: Documenting Victimhood and Restitution in Arizona’s SB1070,” Rubén Casas, University of Wisconsin-Madison
• “The Crisis of National Identity and Grassroots Tactics,” Sharon Yam, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Chair: Kat Lambrecht, University of Nevada Reno

3c. Risky Business: Crisis and Consequence in Project-Based Pedagogy  Room 317

• “Notes Toward a Consequentialist Pedagogy,” Dr. Joshua C. Hilst, Utah Valley University
• “Aiming to Disrupt: The Consequence of Writing-through-failure in the Project-based Classroom,” Dr. Jacqueline Preston, Utah Valley University
• “Rewarding Risk AND Failure,” Dr. Elena G. Garcia, Utah Valley University
• “Crisis as a Resource,” Benjamin G. Goodwin, Utah Valley University

Panel Chair: Dr. Joshua C. Hilst, Utah Valley University

3d. Exploring and Shaping Student Perceptions of Academic and Creative Writing Boundaries  Room 323

• “The Writing that Matters to Writing Majors: Escaping Rules and Baring Souls,” Doug Downs, Montana State University
• “The End of Romance? Identity, Myth, and Practice in the Creative Writing Classroom,” Zach Bean, Montana State University
• “The Pivotal Point to Teach Critical and Creative Writing: Writing 101,” Kim Hoover, Montana State University
• “You are Your Story: Using the Centrality of Narrative Experience in the Writing Class,” Miles Nolte, Montana State University

Chair: Doug Downs, Montana State University

3e. The Unexamined Political Crisis of Material Rhetorics  Room 317

• “Trans-corporeal Solidarity,” Jared Colton, Utah State University
• “Material Solidarity,” Steven Holmes, George Mason University

Chair: Catherine Chaput, University of Nevada Reno

4:45-6:30 PM

Reception: Appetizers and Drinks in the Graduate Reading Room, 4th Floor of the Knowledge Center, Room 422
Sponsored by MacMillan Publishers

Saturday, November 8

9:00-9:30 Coffee outside the Theatre, Joe Crowley Student Union, 3rd Floor

Session IV 9:30-11:00

4a. The Common Core “Crisis” as Opportunity Room 420

- “Mode vs. Genre: What Common Core Could Mean for College Composition,” Kim Donehower, University of North Dakota
- “The Common Void, or the Absence of How Texts Work in the Coming State Standards,” Scott Stevens, University of Redlands
- “Test Patterns and Thoughtful Response: Rhetoric’s Role in Secondary Professional Development,” Rick Hansen, California State University, Fresno

Chair: Jim Webber, University of Nevada Reno

4b. Narrative Framing and Reframing of National Identity Room 317

- “Trauma as Generative Crisis in War,” Jessie Richards, University of Utah
- “Damaged Ecology, Ruined Communities, and Ethos of Engagements in Post-Oil Discovery Nigeria,” Adedoyin Ogunfeyimi, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- “‘No Retreat, No Surrender’: The Shaping of the Crandall Canyon Mine Disaster through Narratives,” Keith Grant-Davie, Utah State University
- “A Splendid Symbol: The Rhetoric of the Hoover Dam,” Jeaneen Canfield, Oklahoma State University

Chair: Merrilyne Lundahl, University of Nevada Reno

4c. The Rhetorics of Expertise: Problems and Possibilities Room 324

- “Rhetoric, Design, and Pain,” Sarah Perrault and Susan Verba, University of California Davis
- “Vulnerability and the Rhetoric of Expertise in times of Crisis,” Mark Hannah, Arizona State University

Chair: Patti Wojahn, New Mexico State University

4d. Spectacular Representation and the Public as Witness to Crisis Room 323

- Crystallizing Tragedy: Trayvon Martin as Crisis of the Criminal Justice System,” Laura J. Collins, Virginia Polytechnic State Institute and University
• “Narratives and Silences: Strategies to Control Crisis and Create Culture,” Jaqueline McLeod Rogers, University of Winnipeg
• “From Official to Internal Narratives in Business: Revising Corporate Crisis Control,” Sheila Page, University of Winnipeg
• “Rhetoric's Trespasses: Karl Yoneda and Transnational Activist Rhetoric” Jonathan Hunt, University of San Francisco

Chair: Blake Watson, University of Nevada, Reno

4e. Crisis and Rhetorical Strategy in the History and Future of Arts in Corrections Room 320

• “No Memo, No Class: Bureaucratic Rhetoric, Technological Literacy, and Social Activism at New Folsom Prison” Anna Plemons, Washington State University
• “Opening Doors From the Inside: Making The Case for the Teacher-Bureaucrat in the California Prison” Jim Carlson, former director of Arts in Corrections
• “All the Available Means: Crisis, Advocacy, and the Inmate Family Council” Carol Hinds, AIC supporter and mother of a current AIC participant
  Appearing by film:
  • Marty Williams, incarcerated teaching artist formerly with AIC
  • Spoon Jackson, incarcerated teaching artist formerly with AIC

Chair: Justin Gifford, University of Nevada Reno

Session V 11:15-12:45

5a. Professional Development in Online Writing Instruction Room 320

• Andrew Bourelle, University of New Mexico
• Tiffany Bourelle, University of New Mexico
• Emilee Howland-Davis, University of Missouri, Columbia
• Anna Knutson, University of Michigan
• Natalie Kubasek, University of New Mexico
• Zoe Speidel, University of New Mexico

Chair: Andrew Bourelle, University of New Mexico

5b. Futures of Non-symbolic Rhetoric Room 420

• “Limits of Persuasive Discourse,” Drake Gossi, University of Nevada Reno
• “Limits of Material Rhetoric,” Nicholas Stanton, University of Nevada Reno
• “Limits of Visual Rhetoric,” Blake Watson, University of Nevada Reno

Chair: Jason Ludden, University of Nevada Reno
5c. **Recommittng the Work of Public Universities: Economic Crisis as Exigence for Public Turns** Room 323

- “Making Academia Matter: The Interdisciplinary Turn toward Public Issues,” Phil Goodwin, University of Nevada, Reno
- “Writing Program Administration in the Age of Accountability: Crisis and The Potential of WPA as Public Intellectual,” Katrina Miller, University of Nevada Reno
- “Narrating Default, Navigating Crisis: Rethinking Public Pedagogy through the Strategic Rhetoric of Personal Hardship,” Crystal Colombini, University of Texas San Antonio

Chair: Amy Pason, University of Nevada Reno

5d. **Art and Experience: Exploration of Crisis through Aesthetic Representation** Room 317

- “Some Day Men Will Read Again: Learning from Literacy Crises in Popular Apocalyptic Texts” Cori Brewster, Eastern Oregon University
- “Zombification and Transition in Literature of Extreme Crises: The Rhetorical Development of Zombies in *Warm Bodies*,” Larry Beason, University of South Alabama
- “The silent generation: A poetic representation of the language policy in Taiwan,” Wan-Ning Yeh, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
- “Epideictic Consolation: Rhetorics of Loss in Poetry and Philosophy,” Sarah Hart Micke, University of Denver

Chair: Tom Hertweck, University of Nevada Reno

5e. **Writing in Crisis: Studies of Health, Safety, and Ethics** Room 324

- “Teaching Students to Play their Hands Close to the Vest: Multimodal Writing as Healing,” Cathryn Molloy, James Madison University
- “Writing to Heal: Personal Journals and Domestic Violence,” Jamie White-Farnham, University of Wisconsin-Superior
- “‘As a Mutant, I Have a Super Power’: The Rhetoric of the Breast Cancer Gene,” Bryna Siegel Finer, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Chair: Peter Goggin, Arizona State University