C&T 6501
Studies in Curriculum and Teaching:
Adolescent Literacies and Multimodality
Spring Semester 2005
Thursdays, 7:20 – 9:00
Instructor: Lalitha Vasudevan

Email: lmv2102@columbia.edu
Office hours: Mondays, 4 – 6; Thursdays, 3 – 5

Course Description:
Literacies in the lives of adolescents have been explored through a variety of lenses, including pedagogical, anthropological, linguistic, educational, and artistic perspectives. Additionally, youth have been the subject of cultural studies, ethnographies, media studies, and are increasingly at the center of the public policy discourse. In this course will explore the layered and multiple interstices of these conversations in our explorations of adolescents’ literacies. We will do so by engaging a broad conceptualization of literacies – as socially situated, multiple, and multimodal practices that are informed by the contexts in which they are engaged. Central to this definition is the recognition that the relationships between literacies and technologies have been evolving significantly in the last decade such that the very notions of communication, representation and meaning making are being transformed. In addition to inquiring deeply into the contexts in which reading and writing occur in youths’ practices across the contexts youth traverse, we will also explore the possibilities of new literacies that emerge when media and new technologies are present. Finally, this course will be a space to explore what it means for youth to represent in this increasingly digital age.

The following questions will guide our collective inquiry in this course:

- What are the relationships between literacies and media/technologies in adolescents’ lives?
- What new spaces for ‘self authoring’ and representation are made possible with the advent of “new” technologies?
- Whose ideas are represented? In what ways? For what purposes? And, more broadly, who tells the stories that are heard, and whose are silenced?
  - And through whose perspectives are they explored?
- What are the implications of adolescents’ literacies and multimodality for contexts of education and educational research?
  - What are the new roles of schools, after-school programs, and other spaces of learning in supporting the literacy learning of children and youth?
  - What are the implications of this conversation about literacies and technologies for the related areas of pedagogy, research, and policy?

The texts for this course are organized into five broad areas of inquiry: 1) **Reconceptualizing Adolescents and Literacies**; 2) **Stories, Texts, Practices, and Genres**; 3) **Literate Spaces**; and 4) **Pedagogy and Politics**; and 5) **(Re)imagination and (Re)presentation**. We will actively engage a range of representational modes to respond to texts and to develop and investigate individual inquiry questions. While we will read a wide variety of texts as a whole class, students will be asked to inquire deeply into one topic relevant to their practice – as practitioners and researchers – and be given the choice to tailor some of their readings to their individual sites of inquiry. Students will have the opportunity to experiment with different media and technologies throughout this seminar.
Course Texts:

Required texts:


Most articles will be available on e-Reserve on ClassWeb. A few articles will be handed out in class.

Choice Texts: Students will choose one additional texts to review closely that is aligned with their interests in taking this course. These texts will be made available on loan, online, or in the library. Listed below are a few titles. These and several other titles will be added to the class bibliography, which can be found on Blackboard.


Several additional articles are included within the course schedule (below). Other texts will be added as we form journal groups and topics of focus are identified.

Course Activities and Assignments
(see schedule below for all due dates)

Class participation:
(25% of total grade)

Students’ participation in this seminar is central to the learning process. Together, we will explore questions, pose critical questions of each other and texts, and pursue various lines of inquiry related to
adolescents’ literacies. In order for this process to be successful, students are expected to participate in class discussions, journal groups (see below) and online discussions (as relevant). To this end, we will spend time at the beginning of the course exploring multiple modes of participation so that we might create a discussion space inclusive of all voices.

Inquiry portfolio:
For the duration of the course, students will maintain an inquiry portfolio whose purpose is to support the paths of inquiry we will pursue, individually and collectively, through readings, assignments, conversations, and reflections. There are three main parts to the inquiry portfolio: a journal, field observations, and a course reflection. Each of these portfolio components is a chance to extend and deepen the inquiry questions that each student will identify and explore deeply during the semester. **Students are expected to explicitly engage with the course texts across all assignments.**

Inquiry journal:
*(25% of total grade)*
Students are asked to keep an inquiry journal to reflect on their journey through this course. This journal will be used to scaffold the development of students’ inquiry questions. Journal groups will be organized at the beginning of class and will meet regularly throughout the course. Students will occasionally be expected to share selections from their journal in class. The following are due dates for the components of the inquiry journal:

- **Inquiry questions** *(due Session 4)* – include the story of your questions; consider such questions as: Why are you interested in this topic? In what aspects of your identities, practices, and experiences are your questions situated? What do you truly want to learn or find out?
- **Text responses** *(due Session 5; before Session 14)* – one of these responses will be based on texts of student’s choice. Responses should be between 4-6 pages long.

Field Observations:
*(25% of total grade)*
Students will conduct two field observations to be shared over the course of the class. These are intended to be opportunities to situate inquiry questions in the context of adolescents. Students will identify locations in their daily travels in which adolescents are engaged in meaning making, are hanging out, and are employing various literacy practices for a variety of purposes (e.g. the park, subway, local diner, school hallway, afterschool club, etc.). After a few informal observations, students will take descriptive notes on what the youth are doing, paying close attention to their meaning making in a particular context. Field observations can be constructed and represented as audio, visual, or written texts; **students will pick two of the three when doing their observations.** For example, if the first observation is in the form of written fieldnotes, students should choose to represent the second observation as an audio or visual text. Students should also include a brief discussion section to each observation in which they should make connections to the course texts. Examples of possible formats will be discussed in class prior to the first observation. We will discuss each of these observations in class on the dates they are due:

- **Field observation 1 – Due Session 7**
- **Field observation 2 – Due Session 11**

Reflection: Due Session 16
*(25% of total grade)*
As the culminating activity for this course, students are asked to demonstrate the journey of their initial inquiry upon entering this course. The purpose of this reflection is to collect the threads of inquiry about youth, literacies, and multimodality together in a coherent final course reflection. Students will respond to the following questions in their reflection:
• What was your path of inquiry into adolescent literacies and multimodality in this course? and Where did your journey take you?
• How do you understand the relationships between literacies and media/technologies in adolescents’ lives?
• What new spaces for ‘self authoring’ and representation were opened up for you?
• What are the implications of your inquiry for your work as a practitioner and researcher?

This project should draw on a range of modes in the construction and representation of the inquiry. Students have a choice of format in representing their final paper including, but not limited to, a short film, “enhanced” formal paper, website, etc.

**Accommodations:** The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Access and Services for Individuals with Disabilities for information about registration (166 Thorndike Hall). Services are available only to students who are registered and submit appropriate documentation. As your instructors, we are happy to discuss specific needs with you as well.

**Attendance policy:** The policy of the Department of Curriculum and Teaching is that you must attend all classes, be on time, and not leave early. You may not receive credit for a course if you miss more than two sessions. The two permitted absences are to allow you to miss class because of serious, extenuating circumstances (e.g. death in the family, illness). If you know ahead of time that you will need to miss a class, please let us know immediately.

**Incomplete policy:** The grade of Incomplete is to be assigned only when the course attendance requirement has been met but, for reasons satisfactory to the instructor, the granting of a final grade has been postponed because certain course assignments are outstanding. If the outstanding assignments are completed within *one calendar year* from the date of the close of term in which the grade of Incomplete was received and a final grade submitted, the final grade will be recorded on the permanent transcript, replacing the grade of Incomplete, with a transcript notation indicating the date that the grade of Incomplete was replaced by a final grade. If the outstanding work is not completed within one calendar year from the date of the close of term in which the grade of Incomplete was received, the grade will remain as a permanent Incomplete on the transcript. In such instances, if the course is a required course or part of an approved program of study, students will be required to re-enroll in the course including repayment of all tuition and fee charges for the new registration and satisfactorily complete all course requirements. If the required course is not offered in subsequent terms, the student should speak with the faculty advisor or program coordinator about their options for fulfilling the degree requirement. Doctoral students with six or more credits (points) with grades of Incomplete included on their program of study will not be allowed to sit for the certification exam.
## COURSE SCHEDULE

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<th>Session/Date</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Texts</th>
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Available via Columbia netLibrary e-book (e-reserve link)  
OR  
**Recommended:**  
| **3** February 3 | | |


+ two responses: pp. 91-92; pp. 93-95


**Recommended:**


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### 4 February

#### DUE: Inquiry Questions

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<th>Stories, Texts, Practices, and Genres</th>
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<td>Literacy through Photography: <a href="http://cds.aas.duke.edu/ltp/showtell/index.html">http://cds.aas.duke.edu/ltp/showtell/index.html</a></td>
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<th>Date</th>
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Recommended:  
Recommended:  
Language Diversity and Learning (p. 48)  
The Politics of Teaching Literate Discourse (pp. 152-166)  

**Recommended:**


**15 April 28**

(Re)imagination and (Re)presentation


**Recommended:**

“Visualising Ethnography” (website) www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/visualising_ethnography/

**16 May 5**

DUE: Reflection Project

Additional recommended reading:


