

## Brenda M. Helmbrecht

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### CURRENT POSITION

Assistant Professor of English  
Director of Writing  
California Polytechnic State University

### EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition, August 2004  
Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

*Dissertation:* "The Pedagogy of Pleasure: Rhetoricizing Media for the Composition Classroom"  
Kate Ronald and Katie Johnson, co-directors; Morris Young, Ann Elizabeth Armstrong

*Areas of Concentration:* Composition Theory and Pedagogy (Writing Assessment, Feminist Pedagogy, Women's Rhetoric) and Media Studies (Visual Rhetoric Film Studies, Feminist Film Theory, Television Studies)

M.A., Rhetoric and Composition, 1999  
Miami University, Oxford, Ohio  
Thesis: "'Does This Sound Right?': Teaching Self-Assessment to Developing Writers"

B.A.: English, with a concentration in Composition, 1997  
Truman State University, Kirksville, Missouri  
(Formerly Northeast Missouri State University)

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### PUBLICATIONS

"The Bustin' and Bitchin' *Ethe* of Third-Wave Zines." *College Composition and Communication*. Spring 2008. With Meredith Love.

"Performing in the Binary Gap: Provoking Social Transformation through Images." *Feminist Teacher*. With Meredith Love. 18.1 (2007).

"Giving Grades, Taking Tolls: Re-Evaluating Our Role in the Assessment of Student Writing." *Teaching English in a Two Year College*. 34.3 (March 2007).

"Graduate Students Hearing Voices: (Mis)Recognition and (Re)Definition of the JWPA Identity." *Untenured Faculty as Writing Program Administrators Institutional Practices and Politics*. Deborah Dew and Alice Horning, Eds. October 2007. With Connie Kendall.

## GRANTS

Center for Teaching and Learning Grant. California Polytechnic State University. \$5700.  
2007-2008

The grant will provide me with release time to develop an ENGL 134 course that can be taught in a computer lab. Students will create BLOGs and post to a class-generated wiki.  
Approval pending.

California State Faculty Support Grant. Four units of release time. Spring 2007  
I used the release time to revise an article for publication.

Center for Teaching and Learning Grant. California Polytechnic State University. \$5700.  
2006-2007

The grant provided me with start-up funding so I could assemble and edit a collection of student writing, titled *Fresh Voices: Composition at Cal Poly*, which is used as a supplementary text in ENGL 134.

## AWARDS (FROM MIAMI UNIVERSITY)

- ▲ College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Student Teaching Award, Spring 2003
- ▲ Department of English Outstanding Teacher Award for Excellence in Teaching Composition, Spring 2002
- ▲ Gamma Phi Beta and Phi Kappa Tau Teacher Recognition Award, Fall 2002
- ▲ College of Arts and Science Teaching Enhancement Grant – awarded to improve the quality of mentoring for graduate-student teachers in the department of English, Fall 2001. With Morris Young, Mary Jean Corbett, and Connie Kendall.
- ▲ Graduate Achievement Award, Awarded by the Graduate School of Miami University, Ohio, Fall 1999
- ▲ Graduate Achievement Award, Awarded by the Graduate School of Miami University, Ohio, Fall 1998

## PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

### NATIONAL

“Fight the Power: Rhetorics of Resistance.” Panel Presenter. Rhetoric Society of America. Seattle. May 2008. Acceptance Pending.

“Don’t Fear the Reiver: Protecting and Building Disciplinary WPA Territories.” Conference on College Composition and Communication. New York. March 2007.

“Ending the Quarantine: Rhetoricizing Media in the Face of Resistance.” Conference on College Composition and Communication in Chicago. Chicago, IL. March 2006.

Guest Speaker. Junior Writing Program Administrators Special Interest Group. Conference on College Composition and Communication. San Francisco, CA; March 2005.  
With Connie Kendall.

“The Detective in All of Us.” Writing Research in the Making. University of California, Santa Barbara. Feb. 506, 2005.

“‘If I could drink it, I would’: Confronting a Mediatized Addiction.” Conference on College Composition and Communication. San Antonio, TX; March 2004.

“Graduate Students Hearing Voices: (Mis)Recognition and (Re)Definition of the JWP Identity.” Junior Writing Program Administrators: Who Matters and Why. Special Interest Group. Conference on College Composition and Communication. San Antonio, TX; March 2004.

“From *Bitch* to *Bust*: The Popular Texts of Third Wave Feminism.” Feminism(s) and Rhetoric(s) Conference. Columbus, OH: October 2003. With Meredith Love.

“The Matter of Media: Using Popular Media to Teach Writing.” The Southwest/Texas Pop Culture Association/American Culture Association Conference. Albuquerque, NM; February 2003.

“Reading Third-Wave Feminism Through its ‘zines.” Presented with Meredith Love. The Conference on College Composition and Communication; Chicago, IL; March 2002.

“(Com)Posing Gaze Theory for Composition Studies: The Gazes of the Writing Process.” The Conference on College Composition and Communication; Denver, CO; March 2001.

“Notes Toward a Teaching Centered University.” National Council of Teachers of English. Conference; Milwaukee, WI; November 2000.

“Revising the Image ‘Woman’ with the Female Gaze: Watching (*Run*) *Lola Run*.” Twenty-Fifth, Silver Anniversary Colloquium on Literature and Film: The Female Gaze in Literature and Film; West Virginia University; October 2000.

“Feminist Rhetorics in the Real World.” Second Biennial Feminism(s) and Rhetoric(s) Conference; Minneapolis, MN; October 1999.

“Giving Grades, Taking Tolls: Re-evaluating Our Role in the Assessment of Student Writing.” The Conference on College Composition and Communication; Atlanta, Georgia; March 1999.

“Stunning Thoughtlessness: Avoiding the Asphyxiation of Instructor Comments.” Thomas R. Watson Conference on Rhetoric and Composition, University of Louisville, Louisville KY, October 1998.

“Living on the Edge: The Marginalization of Composition and Rhetoric in the English Department.” Composition and Rhetoric Colloquium/Workshop with Keith Gilyard and Harriet Malinowitz. Miami University, April 1998.

**LOCAL**

“The *Ethos* of Third-Wave Zines.” Invited Speaker. Chaffey College. Nov. 3 2007.

“English 134: Course Objectives and Curriculum.” Reading Institute for Academic Preparation. Cal Poly. July 2007.

“There is no ‘I’ in Grrrl: The Bustin’ and Bitchin’ Rhetoric of Third Wave Zines.” Cal Poly Women’s Studies Faculty Lecture Series. May 18, 2006.

“What to Expect in English 134.” Guest Speaker Cal Poly Summer Institute. August 2006, 2007.

“The English 134 Pilot Curriculum.” Student Success Roundtable. Guest Speaker. Joint Participation from Cal Poly, Alan Hancock and Cuesta College Writing Centers. February 24, 2006.

“Research Methods in Rhetoric and Composition.” Guest Speaker. English 501: Techniques of Literary Research. Nov. 17, 2004 and November 18 2006.

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE*****Graduate – Cal Poly***

English 505 – Seminar in Composition Theory (English 506) Spring 2005, 2006, 2007

English 505 is a graduate seminar that focuses on the theory and practice of teaching composition. The course aims to familiarize students with the histories and theories of composition studies as they relate to larger disciplinary (English studies) contexts. The course targets three areas: the history of Rhetoric and Composition as a discipline, theories of composition pedagogy, and larger institutional and departmental challenges faced by members of the field. Students complete weekly reading responses, class presentations, and a final seminar paper.

English 506 – Pedagogical Approaches to Composition Fall 2005, 2006, 2007

English 506 is a continuation of English 505. However, each of the students is teaching his/her own composition course and has an opportunity to let the theories and practices we have discussed and will continue to discuss influence their own classroom. While some of discussions focus on the workings of their classes, the course maintains a focus on theory as it informs praxis. Students complete the course with a compiling a teaching portfolio.

Independent Study: Disciplinary Sites: Teaching Composition in Two-Year College  
Winter 2005

The three MA students who enrolled in this independent study explored issues relevant to teaching at two-year colleges, including literacy (particularly that of bilingual students), remedial (basic) writing, and writing assessment. Students were required to shadow an instructor who teaches at a local two-year college and then write a report explaining and

analyzing their experiences. As a final project, students wrote a statement of teaching philosophy, compiled a teaching portfolio, and completed an annotated bibliography.

### *Undergraduate*

English 134: Writing: Exposition. Fall, Winter, Spring 2004; Fall 2005; Fall 2007

English 134 teaches students to manage, understand, and assess their own writing processes. By completing various reading and writing tasks, students learn different strategies for handling different kinds of writing situations, audiences, purposes, and forms applicable both in and out of Cal Poly's classrooms. My goal is to help students develop a writing process with which they feel comfortable and confident, regardless of what they are writing or for whom they are writing.

English 145: Reasoning, Argumentation, and Writing. Fall 2004

This course teaches students to manage, understand, and assess the delivery and presentation of arguments in public and academic contexts. They learn strategies for negotiating different rhetorical situations by studying audience, purpose, and style as these elements function both in and out of composition classrooms. To accomplish these goals, the course looks at writing as a rhetorical and public act that is central to intellectual life and that works as a powerful tool for civic action

English 302: Advanced Composition. Winter 2005, Spring 2006

English 302 studies writing as both a vehicle to communicate ideas with various audiences, and as a means to create personal knowledge. With this objective in mind, students explore three areas of study. First, they interrogate the impressions of writers and writing that they carry with them by studying images of writing and writers created by essays and visual media. Second, they will conduct a research project wherein they study how writing functions across their discipline and/or professional field. Finally, the course concludes by exploring the political nature of language in general, and writing in particular.

Film Genres Across History (English 371) Summer 2005

This course gives students a brief overview of the history of film, introduces them to the basic concepts of film studies, and provides theoretical frameworks for reading films. Students learn to critically examine the technical and stylistic elements of a given film (e.g. camera angles, lighting, sound), as well as interpret films within their aesthetic, social, historical, and political contexts. I teach film through rhetorical theory to help students understand how the cinematic apparatus works to communicate with them as spectators. Students complete various writing assignments, such as an anatomy of a scene project and final essay, as well as take a midterm and give a class presentation.

Truth, Lies, and Documentaries: The Life and Times of Documentary Film  
(English 371) Winter, Summer 2006, Winter 2007

Students study a wide range of documentary films that spread across the long history of the genre. They learn the technical and critical terms for understanding and discussing film as a technology and as an artistic form. In addition, they consider approaches to filming documentaries and how the director's choices can affect meaning in the final production. Lastly, students study how Rhetoric (i.e. how documentaries communicate and persuade via images, editing, sound, etc.) and Aesthetics (i.e. the production value

and visual appeal of the film's images) are informed by both production choices and technology. For the final project, each student is required to make a documentary film. Some use still images and assemble as though they would appear in a film, while other students actually make short movies. They seem to love this project. I have included sample films with my file.

#### Women's Rhetoric(s) (English 469) Winter 2006

This course focuses on gender as it affects language use in general, and argumentation in particular. Women's Rhetoric(s) makes a sustained historical investigation into both women's writing and oratory in an effort to recognize the role of women who have fought for the right to make arguments openly and publicly. The course addresses the following questions: What do we know about rhetoric? About "women's rhetoric"? What are our histories as writers and speakers? What assumptions do historians and theorists of women's rhetoric share? What unique forms, genres, styles and methods of arguments and persuasion have women used? What is the nature of the audiences invoked by women's rhetorical practices? Students complete regular readings responses, take a midterm exam, a final writing project that further studies the course themes, and work in pairs to present on course material to the class.

#### Visual Rhetoric (English 469) Winter 2007

This course studies the complicated and dependent relationship between visual and print texts by examining how images and print communicate with readers/viewers/consumers in uniquely rhetorical ways. Some scholars have suggested that we are returning to "a pictorial age, in which knowledge is communicated as often through images as through words" (Hocks and Kendrick, *Eloquent Images*, 2003). Students explore their choice to access information and knowledge via imagery rather than print. Moreover, students investigated the repercussions of this shift by examining historical moments when images became cultural educators. One primary goal for this course is to work with students to become critical and informed readers/viewers/producers of all kinds of texts, no matter in what form, whether online, on screen, or on paper.

#### Introduction to Women's Studies (WS 301) Fall 2006, Spring 2008

WMS 301 is designed as an introduction to the conversations, debates, and arguments that circulate throughout the field of women's studies. In particular, the course examines what it means to live a "gendered experience" in both historical and current political/cultural climates. Furthermore, the course studies gender as it intersects with race, class, and sexuality, particularly as these relationships manifest in social institutions like government, the workplace, marriage/relationships, education, the entertainment industry, etc. In this course, students will learn to approach gender as a complex "construct" that requires analysis and study.

### ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE AND SERVICE

#### Cal Poly State University

Director of Writing. California Polytechnic State University. Fall 2004 – Current.

As Director, I oversee instructors who teach, English 134, the university's required first-year writing course. In this role, I am responsible for training the TAs, which includes teaching English 505: Seminar in Composition Theory, and English 506: Pedagogical Approaches to Teaching Composition. Each quarter, I also observe classes taught by all new TAs. Each year, I will also be responsible for helping to select the TAs and Lecturers to staff the courses.

**Composition Committee, Chair. Cal Poly. Fall 2004 – Current**

This committee oversees that state of the department's required composition courses. Thus far, I have worked with the committee to complete a curriculum review of the first-year composition course that led to significant revisions of the course. This year, the committee will create a Graduate Student Teaching Award, and an edited collection of student writing. The committee also determines the effectiveness of the curriculum, and is integral revising it to meet the students', department's, and instructors' needs.

**Graduate Committee. Cal Poly. Fall 2004-Current**

I work with the committee to vet the MA exam, as well as write questions for the composition section of the exam. The graduate committee is continually assessing the health and status of the graduate program, working to attract the most talented students possible.

**GE Writing Assessment Steering Committee 2005-2006**

During the fall of 2005, the committee was charged with the task of identifying strengths and weaknesses in both student's writing abilities after they complete GE courses, and the kinds of writing instruction students receive in these courses. In June 2006, we assembled a group of instructors from different disciplines to evaluate student writing samples. The committee is currently visiting the results of the study. We will also be addressing the concerns expressed during the GE program review.

**Miami University, Ohio**

**Writing Across the Curriculum: Howe Writing Initiative**

Richard T. Farmer School of Business Administration, Miami University, 2002-2003, 2003-2004  
<[http://www.sba.muohio.edu/sba\\_web/Centers/hwi/](http://www.sba.muohio.edu/sba_web/Centers/hwi/)>

The Howe Writing Initiative (HWI) is a collaborative project between Miami University's Department of English and the Richard T. Farmer School of Business (SB) designed to enhance the quality of student writing in the School of Business Administration. The HWI assists both SB professors in the teaching of writing and SB students in the improvement of their writing skills. I conduct faculty workshops in designing effective writing assignments and assessing student writing, and give presentations to undergraduate courses ranging from the rhetoric of an advertising campaign and the importance of audience awareness.

**Assistant Director of Composition, 2001-2002**

With the department's Director of Composition, I introduced incoming graduate instructors to the theories and practices that would best serve them as they taught Miami's first-year writing courses. I mentored graduate students by observing their

teaching twice during the academic year, and by providing them with written and verbal feedback.

#### Director of Miami's Portfolio Program, 2001-2002

Miami's Portfolio Program invites incoming students to submit a portfolio of their writing so that they have the opportunity to receive credit for the first-year writing courses. As director of the program, I ran the steering committee that established a scoring rubric, organized the scoring session, and served as editor of *Best of Miami University Portfolios*, a collection of student writing.

- Editor, *Best of Miami University Portfolios*, 1998, 2001, 2002
- Miami University Portfolio Coordinating Committee, Summer 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002

#### Editor and Designer of the English Department's teaching guides: *English 111 Teacher's Guide*, Volume 55, 2002, and *English 112 Teacher's Guide*, Volume I, Summer 2002

As editor, I designed teaching guides that articulated the goals of the first-year writing curriculum to faculty and graduate assistants. The guides present weekly schedules, classroom activities, specific writing assignments, example syllabi, and offer advice for classroom management and writing assessment. The guides also serve the larger goal of conveying the department's first-year writing curriculum to a university-wide audience.

- Assistant Editor *111 Teacher's Guide*, Summer 2001.

#### Editor, *College Composition at Miami*, Summer 2002

*College Composition at Miami (CCM)* is a collection of student texts that are produced in the first-year writing courses and submitted by the students themselves. As editor, I selected for publication student texts that demonstrated an understanding of rhetorical concepts, used language effectively, and addressed a wide array of audiences. *CCM* is a required texts for all first-year writing courses.

- ▲ Assistant Editor, *College Composition at Miami*, Summer 2001

#### REFERENCES

Dr. Kate Ronald, Dissertation Co-Chair  
 Roger and Joyce L. Howe Professor  
 Department of English and School of Business Administration  
 Miami University  
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Dr. Kathleen Johnson  
 Assistant Professor of English  
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