

# Rhetoric and Composition

Fall 2015 Program Newsletter

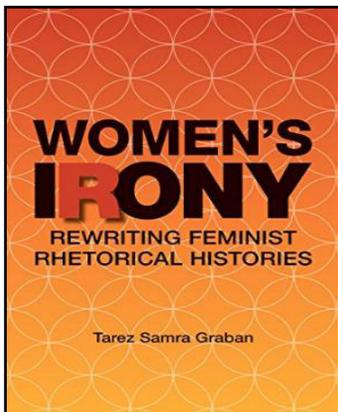


## Rhet/Comp Faculty Publish New Book Projects

This year, two FSU Rhetoric and Composition faculty members published monograph projects that focus on challenging dominant narratives through historical recovery and theory building. Dr. Tarez Samra Graban's *Women's Irony: Rewriting Feminist Rhetorical Histories*, published by Southern Illinois University Press, complicates reductive accounts of "who has harmed and who is harmed" throughout rhetorical history by offering irony as a critical framework for doing feminist recovery with texts, discourses, and archives. Dr. Rhea Estelle Lathan's *Freedom Writing: African American Civil Rights Literacy Activism, 1955-1967*, published by National Council of Teachers of English, recovers stories of learning and literacy activism in the Civil Rights Movement through the lens of gospel literacy, a framework that considers the interplay between the secular and religious.

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### *Women's Irony*



*Women's Irony* is Dr. Graban's attempt to promote a kind of critical historiography that is "also a way of building theory about rhetoric." In discussing the evolution of the book, Dr. Graban points repeatedly to the connection between history and theory. Each chapter acts as an extended case study that both recovers women's

contributions to rhetoric and redefines relationships between pairs of concepts that are central to recovering their work, such as women and agency, language and history, and location and memory. Taken together, the chapters offer a progressive rereading – from Renaissance texts to Puritanical histories to Suffrage archives – but this was not always the structure of the book, Dr. Graban explains. In earlier drafts, *Women's Irony* was comprised of longer chapters that were primarily analytical with shorter inter-chapters detailing what critical moral could be learned from each analysis. Dr. Graban eventually found that the two types of chapters worked against each other, making the book laborious to read. So, the chapters and the inter-

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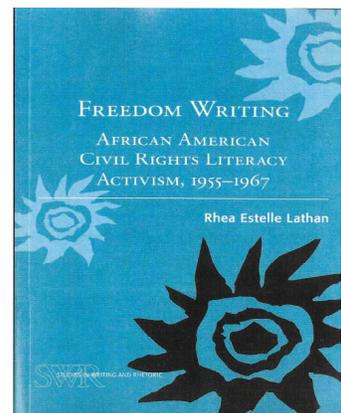
chapters merged, becoming three historical case studies that served as an invitation to evolve feminist theory for scholars of rhetoric. Dr. Graban situates this collapsed version of the book as a direct response to Jacqueline Jones Royster and Gesa E. Kirsch's *Feminist Rhetorical Practices*, in which the authors call for historians to engage new terms, concepts, and methods for the emerging terrain of feminist historical work. In composing *Women's Irony*, Dr. Graban did not find

many models for creating such projects and so offers her book as one such model for questioning why irony – or any other trope, for that matter – becomes a pervasive part of the feminist rhetorical archive, and for investigating how to unsettle the narratives

through which rhetorical historians remember. *Women's Irony*, in fact, outlines the critique upon which Dr. Graban bases her next book project, "Rhetoric, Irony, and Transnational Feminism," which she describes as a "study of contemporary women politicians and how their written performances get mediated through national, international, and transnational memory." Focusing on a group of women leaders from selected nations between 1915 and 2015, the project explores assumptions about rhetorical remembering on the global stage. "Wherever we historicize women, Dr. Graban explains, "we are still pointing to the irony in their texts or to their subject positions as ironic." So as not to reproduce western notions of "self," "other," and "belonging," Dr. Graban sees the need to challenge this historical trope.

### *Freedom Writing*

"My goal," Dr. Lathan states, has always been to "challenge and dispel the myth of what intellectual activity and activism look like. When you Google black intellectuals you get Dubois, Cornel West...you get all these men who are academics... and way down the line you might see a picture of Ida B Wells." Intellectual activity, she points out, happens in spaces other than the academic classroom, and those ways of knowing need to be respected. One of the



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many ways in which Dr. Lathan uses *Freedom Writing* to challenge such myths and explore such spaces is to compose the book for a wide audience of scholars, including those from Rhetoric and Composition, History, Literacy Studies, and African American Studies, by using a conversational style. Early drafts of *Freedom Writing*, Dr. Lathan explains, were characterized by a traditional analytical approach and included large sections dedicated to parsing out rhetorical and literacy theory, both of which spoke to a specific in-field audience. After acceptance, Dr. Lathan recounts, editors recommended that she revise the book in a more narrative, informal style in order to appeal to a diverse audience, a revision that she stresses was like learning to write in a new

way. Both gospel literacy as a framework and the data collected from interviews and archival research remained largely the same in the narrative revision, but the use of story helped Dr. Lathan’s work cross disciplinary boundaries in the process of challenging dominant narratives. Dr. Lathan’s next book project will continue this work, exploring community-based literacy activism in the Atlanta area by focusing on nontraditional organizations, such as beauty shop schools, the Nation of Islam, and private schools. History scholars, Dr. Lathan notes, have written about such institutions, but no one has analyzed the writing, teaching, and learning that took place there. As result, more stories remain to be told.

## Student Spotlights



Sean McCullough is a first year MA student in Rhetoric and Composition who received his BA from Wittenburgh University. Sean became interested in composition studies while working at the writing center at Wittenburgh, an interest he

continues to pursue at FSU. In his first semester at FSU, Sean has begun narrowing his focus toward what some might term the Rhetoric side of the field, as he is particularly drawn to semiotics, embodied rhetoric, feminist rhetoric, and Jurgen Habermas’ conception of the ‘public sphere.’ Sean was recently accepted to 2016 RSA conference in Atlanta, where he will present “Failure in Form: Samuel Richardson’s Conduct Rhetoric as Impetus for Change,” a project that analyzes the rhetoric of Richardson’s 18th century conduct books. Richardson, Sean argues, prompted a revolution in female conduct books by eschewing male-dominated discourse about women’s roles, encouraging women to both speak their minds and seek education. In addition to his academic passions, Sean enjoys composing music and hopes to explore intersections between music and composition studies.



Molly Daniel is a fifth-year PhD Candidate in Rhetoric and Composition, who received her MA and BA from Marshall University. Her dissertation, “Dancing into the Digital: Embodied Performance and Digital Multimodal Composition” explores the intersect-

ion of the/a/our body and technology, and suggests that technology allows us to extend our bodies through the technology we engage because it is an integral part of composing, especially in terms of the mind-body connection and hyperawareness. Molly currently teaches #ENC2135MD with a focus upon digital spaces—and loves it. She is constantly amazed by the work her students produce as well as the way they have gained agency in their use of twitter to explore important issues and find professional voices. When Molly isn’t dissertating, teaching, or job marketing, she can be found teaching Hot Power Hour at Hot Yoga Tallahassee dancing with her dance family at Dance Tallahassee; and sharing her love of dancing with her students at Hannah Bergstrom School of Dance. Without her dance and yogs outlets, she wouldn’t get anything done. There’s a direct corelation between words produce and dancing done .

## Fall Conference Participation

### FEMINISMS AND RHETORICS

Erin Workman - “Emma Willard’s ‘Temple of Time’: Constructing Collective Memory through Textbook Illustrations”

Amanda Brooks - “‘Striking a Pose’: Strategic Juxtaposition as a Tool for Visual Argument”

Kathleen Yancey - “Eulogy for a Lost Object”

Jennifer Enoch - “Do Not Forget His Name’: Making and Re-Making the Self in Everyday Writing”

Molly Daniel - “The/a/our Body in Motion: Dancing Composition Digitally”

Julianna Edmonds - “Do Clothes Make the Woman? : (De)Stabilizing Ethos in the Visual Identities of Hillary Rodham Clinton”

Tarez Samara Graban - “Retiring the ‘Iron Lady’ Trope: A New Rhetorical Perspective on Transnational Belonging”

### SAMLA

Erin Workman - “Supporting Students’ Transfer of Writing Knowledge and Practice through Visual Mapping”

Megan Keaton - “Remediation as Concept and Technique: Helping Students Learn to Approach Unfamiliar Genres”

Kathleen Yancey - “Assemblage as Compositional Theory and Practice”

### IWCA

Aimee Jones - “(R)Evolving the Narrative: Revisiting Key Terms through Consultation with Underrepresented Writers”

Bruce Bowles - “Working with Graduate Students: Different Clients, Different Practice?”

Heather Lang - “Engaging Disability the Writing Center”