



### Protest Rhetoric in Action:

#### Dr. Nancy Welch Visits Rhetoric and Composition Program

A self-described product and a beneficiary of the turbulent 60s, Dr. Nancy Welch, professor of English at the University of Vermont, shared her commitment to social justice and public writing during her visit with the Rhetoric and Composition Program on Thursday, September, 18, 2018. Featuring a round table with Dr. Rhea Lathan and Dr. Jacki Fiscus on civic activism in the composition classroom and the community, Dr. Welch’s visit culminated with a presentation based on her work in progress: “Unruly Rhetoric: Protest, Persuasion, and Publics”.



A scholar of social movement rhetoric as well as a passionate practitioner of protest rhetoric, Dr. Welch lives her beliefs in her classroom and on the streets. She recounts her experience at a 2003 Conference on College Composition and Communication when she joined a demonstration in New York City protesting the bombing of Baghdad, recalling both the police resistance to the demonstrators and the reluctance of many Cs attendees to join her in the protest. Dr. Welch also highlights the ways in which she, as a teacher, can help her students find or make their own spaces where their ideas and arguments can be heard. Of special concern is the role of neoliberalism in privatizing public spaces and thus eroding opportunities and sites for students to speak to social injustice. But neoliberalism affects more than spaces to speak for her students; it also affects the ability to attend college, Dr. Welch contends.

Joining an array of scholars concerned with decreasing access to post-secondary education, Dr. Welch worries that the very policies that afforded her the ability to attend college even as she

worked full-time as a secretary are being undercut by privatization. As she shared with the Rhetoric and Composition graduate students during her interview, Dr. Welch fears that neoliberalism is denying the need for funded public education and thus disenfranchising an important element of the student population.

The need to act ethically in ways to ensure social justice is at the heart of Dr. Welch’s life as a teacher and scholar, a need readily evident in her presentation. In “Marxist Ethics for Uncertain Time,” Dr. Welch draws from an essay in progress, arguing that Marxist ethics provides a method, a compass calibrated to the lived experiences of the exploited and oppressed. Such experiences include ignoring teachers’ appeals by a legislature intent on cancelling pensions and hiking healthcare premiums as well as university administrators eliminating faculty positions while growing their ranks. These perspectives and experiences, argues rhetorician Dana Cloud, are also “the conditions of possibility for alternative realities and rhetoric’s based upon them.”

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#### Congratulations, Matt and Kara!



Rhetoric and Composition Program Alums Matt Davis ’12 and Kara Taczak ’11 were named new editors of *Composition Studies*, a peer-reviewed, biannual journal currently housed at the University of Cincinnati. The Journal is the oldest independent periodical in the field, *Composition Studies* is an academic journal dedicated to the range of professional practices associated with rhetoric and composition. Matt and Kara’s first issue as editors will be the Fall 2019 issue.

## Welcome, Dr. Jaclyn Fiscus

When you have a moment, climb the stairs to the fourth floor and find the office of Dr. Jaclyn (Jacki) Fiscus, the newest faculty member of the Rhetoric and Composition Graduate Program. A graduate of University of Washington's PhD program in English, Dr. Fiscus situates her scholarship at the intersection of composition studies and linguistics, exploring how communication works, how people think it should work, and how we might address those ideologies through pedagogy and policy to better work across difference.

So, if you haven't already met her through participating in her graduate composition theory and practice seminar or joining her in her writing group on Monday afternoons or benefitting from her expertise on the Placement Committee, trek up to the fourth floor and welcome Dr. Fiscus to FSU and the Rhetoric and Composition Program.



## Student Spotlight



### Anna Worm

Anna is working on a fifth year as a PhD student. She earned her MA and BA in English Literature from Grand Valley State University in Michigan. She's interested in writing centers, embodiment, and queer rhetorics, and especially the places where those things overlap. Right now, she's working on a dissertation that covers two of those topics and teaching Rhetoric and Peer Tutoring. She likes presenting at conferences in cold cities with robust public transit systems, and, after many years of protest, she's finally willing to concede that she does, in fact, like sci-fi.

### Caitlin Hattaway

A graduate of the Editing, Writing, and Media program here at FSU for her Bachelor's, Caitlin returned for her Master's in Rhetoric and Composition, where she is currently in her second year. Caitlin's love of language and composing actually began from a place of frustration with speaking, reading, and writing when she was young; after years of struggling to be able to communicate with and understand others, a few incredibly influential instructors and friends helped turn that around. That act changed her life and perspectives, and she has made it her mission to be able to do the same for others. She plans to teach at two-year colleges and dual-enrollment upon graduation, and hopes to be able to continue working in writing centers. Her interests include multimodal composing, digital rhetorics and composition, and writing center work. When not working, Caitlin loves to embroider and sew, drink tea while watching cheesy British television, and walk the many Tallahassee trails with her puppy, Hazel.

