



RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

PROGRAM NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2021

NITYA PANDEY WINS SCHOLARS FOR THE DREAM TRAVEL AWARD

Nitya Pandey is one of only 10 students this year to win the highly competitive Scholars for the Dream Travel Award issued annually by the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). CCCC sponsors the Scholars for the Dream Awards to encourage scholarship by historically underrepresented groups, including Black, Latinx, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander scholars—persons whose presence and contributions are central to the full realization of the field’s professional goals. The Awards Selection Committee considers originality of research, significance of pedagogical or theoretical contributions to the field, and potential for larger, subsequent projects. Nitya’s presentation entitled “FYC Instructors as Agents of Transfer: Linking Multiple Writing Contexts” argues for the transformation of writing instruction to reflect authentic present-day writing contexts. This transformation includes a deep investigation into knowledge transfer between the writing in college composition and popular social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Nitya will be announced as a recipient of the CCCC Scholars for the Dream Travel Award on Thursday, April 8, during the 2021 CCCC Virtual Annual Convention.



SPRING SPEAKERS: DR. CHERYL GEISLER & DR. MARGARET PRICE

Despite continued COVID pandemic distancing, the program is virtually hosting two exciting speakers this spring. The first was Dr. Cheryl Geisler, coauthor of the book *Coding Streams of Language: Techniques for the Systematic Coding of Text, Talk, and Other Verbal Data*, which has been used in the research methods seminars for the past several semesters. Geisler led a virtual workshop on February 5th on coding qualitative data, using interview data for one of our own PhD students, Rob Cole, as an illustration. She also made herself available for one-on-one consultations after the workshop. The other speaker will be Margaret Price, whose book *Mad at School: Rhetorics of Mental Disability and Academic Life* is the spring book for Reading Group this semester. Price’s talk on March 15th includes responses to her work and how writing instructors are developing policies and pedagogical approaches to mental disability. While we miss the opportunities for face-to-face speakers, we’re grateful for the ability to keep the intellectual conversations and interactions going, even if it’s only through distance media.

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE FUNDING OPTIONS

All three graduate programs in the English Department recently contributed funds to the departmental Diversity Committee, who launched several new initiatives this year. In addition to an open call for proposals, the Diversity Committee earmarked funds in four areas:

1. Graduate students who are presenting work related to issues of diversity (e.g., race, gender, sexuality, disability).
2. A panel on pedagogy that specifically addresses how to provide support for students from underrepresented communities.
3. A mentorship program for students in underrepresented communities in the English Department.
4. Continuing the diversity reading initiative that was piloted last spring.

We are proud to have our own Dr. Rhea Lathan as co-chair of the departmental Diversity Committee, which she has graciously taken on along with her many other responsibilities.

KATHLEEN BLAKE YANCEY TRAVEL AWARDS

To honor the remarkable career of recently retired professor, colleague, mentor, and friend, Dr. Kathleen Blake Yancey, the Rhetoric and Composition Program has established a fund for two annual travel awards in the amount of \$500 each for graduate students to attend the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) and the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA). Kathi will help select winners of the awards each year. It's only fitting that this award will encourage and support students who are pushing the intellectual boundaries of the field in provocative and helpful ways.



“IN-FLIGHT” MA TO PHD OPTION



This year the Rhetoric and Composition program piloted a new process for current MA students applying to continue into the PhD at FSU. While many graduate programs around the country accept undergraduates straight into PhD programs, our department affirms the value of a distinct MA degree. As an alternative to the straight-to-PhD track, second-year MA students wishing to stay for the PhD were invited to apply prior to the regular admissions cycle for an “early decision.” One MA student—Gabi Diaz—applied through this process and was admitted immediately into the PhD program. Gabi, and other students who apply through this program, still complete the full MA program and will receive what the Graduate School refers to as an “In-Flight” MA degree. Our hope is that this streamlined admissions process will allow others like Gabi, who know they want to continue into their PhD studies, to apply with fewer obstacles while finishing their MA work. Congratulations to our newest PhD student, Gabi Diaz! We hope this new option will appeal to others as well.