

RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION



Behind the Interview: Students Get Insight into Rhet/Comp Community

“I probably shouldn’t have all this fun with it,” laughs second-year PhD. student **Kendra Mitchell**, as she reflects on her experience interviewing the rhet/comp program’s visiting speakers. Kendra has been a part of the interview team for a year and a half. She’s had the honor of interviewing several visiting speakers, and she has, indeed, had a lot of fun.

“We get to see [the visiting speakers] with their hair down. We get to see them as people, and that’s something that we don’t get from reading their essays or books,” says Kendra.

“You get to hear people tell their stories, and that’s fun. Without fail, they’re really interesting, passionate people.”

Fellow graduate student **Matt Davis** has also enjoyed being part of the interview team.

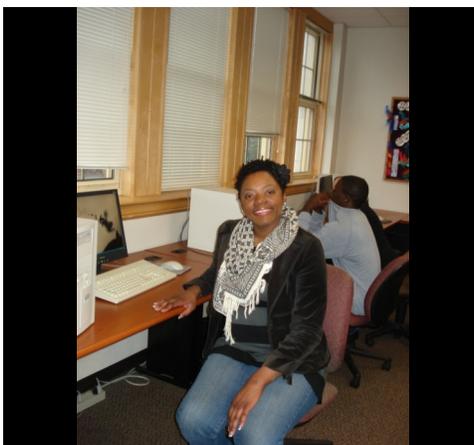
“You get to hear people tell their stories, and that’s fun. Without fail, they’re really interesting, passionate people. Not only their work is interesting, but they are funny and engaging,” he says.

Both Kendra and Matt see their interview experiences as influential in their own research interests.

“These people have such a large body of knowledge and vision of how things work. Some have thirty or more years of experience, so they have a million dissertation ideas in their head,” says Matt.

He continues, “When somebody like Donald Leu comes and he’s into how research on writing and research on reading can pair up, at the end of the day, you’re like ‘Wow, that’s what I’ll do.’ Then

Chuck Bazerman comes and says what will be interesting in Rhet/Comp will be pairing up with scientists, and you’re like, ‘Great, I’ll do that.’ So after two or three interviews, you have a lifetime of research questions.”



Through interviewing visiting scholars, Kendra finds encouragement in her research. “I get that camaraderie, that sense of ownership of what I’m doing and a partnership with what they’re doing,” she says. “That’s why I do it, why I get excited. Meeting them and hearing their stories lets us envision how we might be.”

Being part of the interview team also

allows graduate students to engage with visiting speakers differently from other events.

“Interviewing and other visiting scholar events speak to each other—there’s overlap,” Kendra says. “But the interview allows them to think intentionally about what they want to share.”

“The interview setting, that’s their time to talk. You hear stories you wouldn’t otherwise hear,” Matt says. “It ends up being a dialogue, because they’re interested in what we’re researching. Halfway through the interview they’ll ask what everyone in the room is working on.”

Interviewing has let FSU grad students connect with scholars. Kendra recalls her excitement from when Shirley Logan remembered her at CCCC because of the level of engagement they had during Logan’s FSU visit.

Matt remembers hearing Meg Morgan’s stories involving a former professor of his from NC State. “They fit in with grad students—we see continuing connections of people,” says Matt. Discovering these continuing connections of people helps us see the field of rhetoric and composition as a community.

Visiting Speaker



Gunther Kress

Gunther Kress, Professor of Semiotics and Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, is interested in meaning-making and communication in contemporary environments. His most recent book is *Multimodality: a social semiotic approach to contemporary communication* (2010).

Kress will give a talk, “Writing in the frame of a social semiotic multimodal theory of composition,” on **February 16 at 4:00 pm** in the **English Common Room**. In the talk, he will examine some currently important terms, such as **composition, design, writing**, and will necessarily raise again the essential notion of **genre**. In part, his interest lies in the relation of these terms to social givens and to social change, and in part to their distinctly different status and appearance in a linguistic as against a social semiotic theory. He brings all this together in what might become a **useable contemporary theory of composition**. In that theory, writing is (re-) assigned a place in a semiotically and socially differently configured landscape.



Leah Cassorla

Panopticism, Journalism, and Digital Convergence; Oh my!

Kristie Fleckenstein

Creating the New Negro: W.E.B. Du-Bois's Visual Work at the 1900 Paris Exposition

Scott Gage

Wish You Were Here: Lynching Postcards and the Visual Rhetoric of White Supremacy

Jessica Jackson and Kendra Mitchell

Toward a Pedagogy of Inclusion

Rhea Lathan

And Still I Rise: Unceasing Variations in an Early Afrafeminist Academic Career

Rory Lee and Natalie Szymanski

"We Don't Do That Here": Pushing the (Digital) Boundaries of What We "Do" in Writing Center Spaces

Michael Neal

Something Old, Something New: Ideas for Teaching in the Digital Age

Jennifer O'Malley

Sustaining Differences: Gendered Discourse Patterns in the First-Year Composition Class Blog

Liane Robertson

Teaching for Transfer: Strengthening the Relationship between First-year Composition and Writing in Multidisciplinary Contexts

Kara Taczak

Reflection and Reflective Practice: Key Links in the Transfer Debate

Kathleen Blake Yancey

"Glad You're Not Here": The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, Postcards, Scrapbooks, and Visual Compositions of the Past

New to Florida State University

Stephen McElroy and Leigh Graziano are excited to be here. As first-year PhD students new to Florida State, Stephen and Leigh have enjoyed becoming part of the FSU rhet/comp community.

"I'm really happy here," says Leigh. "Everyone's been super welcoming and super helpful. I felt part of the club right away."

Stephen agrees. "I like the sense of community and support everyone has for each other."



Stephen finds his workload as a rhet/comp PhD student pretty rigorous. "I expected to be challenged and definitely was. In fact, I think that's something that surprised me—I was even more challenged than I expected."

Stephen and Leigh look forward to continuing to be challenged in the program. They are both invested in exploring their research interests. Leigh's background in literature led her to examine the intersection of composition and literature. But as a beginning PhD student, she knew she wanted to do more exploring.

"Since coming in to the program, I

knew I was new and I didn't want to pigeonhole myself." Over the fall semester, she honed in on her interest in visual rhetoric. "I'm quite obsessed right now to an unhealthy degree with vernacular memorials," Leigh laughs.

Leigh completed two projects on the topic last semester, and will present her paper, "Epideictic and Deliberative Visual Rhetoric in Vernacular Memorials" in April at the Research Network Forum in Atlanta.

"My interests change week to week," says Stephen. "Seriously, they do. **Every new class period, every new reading seems to offer something new: visual rhetoric, Kenneth Burke, photography, all that jazz.**"

When prompted, Stephen reveals his current research interest—examining what happens in the Digital Studio and how the Digital Studio may develop in the future.

There's a lot for Stephen and Leigh to be excited about. They look forward to taking new administrative and instructor roles as they continue in the program.



Rhet/Comp program at English Dept. Holiday Party,



Congratulations to Matt Davis on passing his prelims!



Congratulations to Jen O'Malley and Caleb Sutton for their successful thesis defenses!

