

The Politics of Writing

Instructor: Faigley
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Writing is commonly studied and taught as a vehicle for self-expression, a medium of communication and a means of creating knowledge. This course considers writing as an instrument of power.

The course begins by examining the relationship of language and power, which is by no means a simple one. We will consider theories of how ideologies are mediated through language and ways in which meaning serves to sustain relations of power. We will then turn to three strands of post-structuralist theory that bear upon this issue: the radical relativism of Foucault, nonessentialist feminism, and neo-marxism. The course will conclude with how post-structuralist theory has come to influence current work in rhetoric and composition, both theory and classroom practice.

The main requirement for the course will be a paper of 15-20 pages. You will also write short one-page reaction papers in response to some of the readings.

Texts:

- Angus, Ian and Sut Jhally. *Cultural Politics in Contemporary America*. New York: Routledge, 1989.
- Dreyfus, Hubert, and Paul Rabinow. *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983. 2nd ed.
- Fairclough, Norman. *Language and Power*. New York: Longman, 1989.
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon, 1980.
- Thompson, John. *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*. Cambridge: Polity, 1984.
- Weedon, Chris. *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. London: Basil Blackwell, 1987.
- A collection of photocopied articles and chapters