

Beyond Reading Comprehension: Critical Literacies in a General Humanities Classroom

Intellectual Heritage Program
College of Liberal Arts
Temple University

Gary D. Pratt, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Instruction
Jane Gee, M.A.H., Adjunct Instructor
Andrew Mossin, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Instruction
Jonathan Pappas, M.F.A., Adjunct Instructor
Norm Roessler, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Instruction
Rebekah Zhuraw, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Instruction



Agostino Ramelli's reading machine (1588)



Reading *Gilgamesh* on SEPTA 's Broad Street Line (2012)

Reading as text-making and re-making



"First, a few early walkers who live beside the park take brisk strolls (The Death and Life of Great American Cities, pp.96)."

Since its inception in the 1980s, the Intellectual Heritage Program defined itself as a classic Great Books program grounded in the Western tradition. Following its curriculum change in 2008, the IH Program has rededicated its mission to one central critical skill: **reading**. This curricular revamp necessitated an abandonment of chronology and disciplinary information to the service of textual analysis. Reading lists were shortened and curated. Its long-standing writing-intensive designation was removed. Writing as a curricular piece in the courses flipped conventional approaches, and a previous emphasis on compositional proficiency and product evolved into practices where writing served to develop more confident, independent, and self-directed readers. As a consequence, reading became the mantle that now sets IH apart from and above the other foundational courses.

The skill of reading in the IH courses is understood as a set of multiple practices that go beyond basic reading comprehension. In order to engage students in deep learning, they are invited to become conspirators in the process of textual intervention and interrogation. Here we hope to showcase innovative assignments and practices that promote **critical literacies**.

Mosaic II: Spring 2015
Prof. Andrew Mossin

Spaces of Utopia: A Hands-on Approach

Due: Posted to Blackboard by Sunday, February 15, by 12 noon
Length: Five issues with captions, one theory as your model for how to write

DEFINING LITERATURE CIRCLES

1. Students choose their own reading materials
2. Small temporary groups are formed, based upon book choice
3. Different groups read different books
4. Groups meet on a regular, predictable schedule to discuss their reading
5. Students use written or drawn notes to guide both their reading and discussion
6. Discussion topics come from the students (or from Reading Guides; you decide)
7. Group meetings aim to be open, natural conversations about books, so personal connections, digressions, and open-ended questions are welcome

Discovering historical contexts through student-led tasks

assignment allows my audience to gauge where I was as both a reader and writer at the start of the semester. In my reading profile, I note how I approach difficult texts. Although I still heavily utilize these strategies, the following assignments, which include four of my blog posts, my Jenner Wiki assignment, and my essay from Exam I, illustrate my advancements and thought processes throughout the intriguing yet difficult texts we studied this semester.

Blogging each week was essential throughout this course, and it enabled me to freely respond to the readings we were assigned each week. I found these exercises to be extremely beneficial because they challenged as both a reader and writer. In each blog I chose for my

Modeling process for Part II (Historical research) of the Jenner wiki project

Ethnography as a form of readerly consciousness

Information literacy as contextualized, integrated and student-generated

Mapping Las Casas (1517 - 1518)

See references in the LC text

- El Cid, Puerto Rico
- Cipriano (Petrus de Sarnano), De
- Puerto Real (Marino), Puerto Rico
- Magueño (San Juan de la Maguana),
- Higüey, Dominican Republic
- San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Jamaica
- Cuba
- Nicaragua
- Yucatan, Mexico
- Mexico City, Mexico
- Cholula, Mexico
- Matlan, Guatemala
- Panuco, Mexico
- Jalisco, Mexico
- Yucatan, Mexico

Higüey, Dominican Republic

Page 16, 1492 AD - 1493 AD: The Queen of Higüey was named Higüeyana, who was hung, along with the "infidelities of people who were burned alive, hacked to pieces and tortured by divers and new ways of killings and torment." Anyone who survived (mostly young boys, and women and children) was made a slave, with some Spaniards getting up to forty personal slaves. The slaves were forced to work hard labor jobs in mines and in fields, and men and women were being along separate jobs, that is to be shipped away children.

Details from Google Maps
Higüey 23000, Dominican Republic
Google page

Critical literacy:
awareness +
engagement =
constructing knowledge



Portrait of Paulo Freire. Source: oglobo.globo.com

Starring Kristen Stewart

The Rape of Dinah

"Historicizing and contextualizing"

"A story about a family, about God, and about finding strength"

"This play opens your eyes to the gender equality progress we've made."

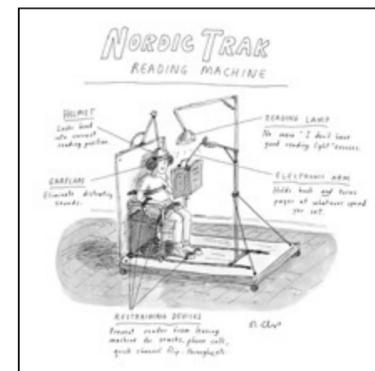
Temple University
College of Liberal Arts
General Education Program
Spring 2016
presents.

The MosaicX Seminars (Parts I & 2)

"The goal is not to make a 'filmstrip' video, but to make a video 'filmstrip'."



Still from Verhoeven's *Starship Troopers* (1997)



Roz Chast cartoon (date unknown)



Clyde Moneyhun:
reading pedagogy =
writing pedagogy



Botticelli's *Magnificat* (1481)

Visit: <https://sites.temple.edu/beyondreading>

Armstrong, S. L., & Newman, M. (2011). Teaching textual conversations: Intertextuality in the college reading classroom. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 41(2), 6-21.

Van Blerkom, D. L., Van Blerkom, M. L., & Bertsch, S. (2006). Study strategies and generative learning: What works? *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 37(1), 7-18