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We live at a challenging time with respect to literacy. The profusion of new literacies, from science, civic, and spatial literacy to information, health, and visual literacy, represents progress in terms of recognizing the complexities of making, communicating, and understanding meaning within and across distinct domains and disciplines. Yet, the progress is easily lost amid the clash of claims and counterclaims, and the recurring sense of a literacy crisis.

Literacy Studies formed in 2004 as an interdisciplinary working group of the Humanities Institute, under the direction of Harvey J. Graff, Ohio Eminent Scholar in Literacy Studies and Professor of English and History. The intent was to foster a campus-wide conversation and collaborative investigation into the nature of literacy, bringing together historical, contextual, comparative, and critical perspectives and modes of understanding.

The group began its work by inviting distinguished scholars of literacy to share their insights and ideas. They also organized cross-disciplinary forums around central questions, such as the roles of literacy in science and health. The aim overall was to explore ideas about and approaches to literacy and literacy studies at The Ohio State University, where interests and strengths range widely. These initial efforts kindled new institutional and intellectual relationships between different disciplinary clusters and their faculty, staff, and students, from the arts, humanities, and sciences, to education, medicine, engineering, and law.

The Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization in Literacy Studies is one of many important outcomes. Similar to a graduate minor, the interdisciplinary specialization provides graduate students the opportunity to designate literacy studies as their secondary field of study. How scholars understand and study literacy depends in no small part on their disciplinary background. The variety of definitions, ideas, and approaches as well as much of the confusion and concern demonstrates the value of interdisciplinary perspectives.

LiteracyStudies@OSU, now a University-wide initiative supported by the College of Arts and Sciences, the Humanities Institute, and the Department of English, is recognized nationally and internationally as a model of interdisciplinary program development.
LiteracyStudies@OSU INITIATIVES

LiteracyStudies@OSU initiatives are the result of shared interests and collaborative efforts. The goal is to enable conversation and cooperation across departments, across campus, and beyond. Participation is helping to increase awareness of the complexities of literacy in diverse media and cultural contexts. The dialogue also gives rise to new initiatives and activities, such as the new Literacy in Translation Series.

LECTURE SERIES
The LiteracyStudies@OSU lecture series has made OSU the place for both accomplished and emerging scholars to present major studies or preview works-in-progress. Past speakers include Mike Rose, Deborah Brandt, Shirley Brice Heath, Ira Shor, Jon Miller, David Nord, John Duffy, Lesley Bartlett, Teresa McCarty, Curt Dudley-Marling, Joanna Drucker, Claudia Angelelli, and Randall McLeod.

PUBLIC PROGRAM SERIES
Public programs are organized and moderated by members of the advisory group as a way to explore their research goals and interests as well as to bring colleagues from different disciplinary areas across the University together. The profusion of distinct literacies, from dance, science, and health literacies to civic, environmental, and global literacies demonstrates that the needs and opportunities for study cross and connect all disciplines and domains.

GRADUATE INTERDISCIPLINARY SPECIALIZATION IN LITERACY STUDIES
Similar to a graduate-level minor, the Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization in Literacy Studies curriculum involves the perspective of multiple disciplines. The goals and opportunities include studying the acquisition, uses, practices, and consequences of literacy, and its place in relation to other modes of communication. The principal courses are Introduction to Graduate Studies in Literacy and History of Literacy. The coordinating advisor is Professor Harvey Graff. Interested students are encouraged to contact him at graff.40@osu.edu.

EXPANDING LITERACY STUDIES, an international, interdisciplinary conference for graduate students organized by LiteracyStudies@OSU and held on the Ohio State campus, involved 225 presenters representing 66 institutions and 6 countries.

Nora McCook discusses her doctoral research on literacy initiatives in Haiti.
GROUPS
The working and study groups connect faculty, staff, and students across the humanities, arts, sciences and professional schools.

History of the Book
The History of the Book group formed in 2005. The group meets regularly for talks by colleagues and invited speakers. Interests range from the social, economic, and cultural history of printing to book arts and digital media.

Literacy in Science
In response to ongoing concerns about the definitions and relationships of scientific literacy to science education and science communication, LiteracyStudies@OSU initiated the working group on literacy in science in 2010.

Literacy in Health and Medicine
In effort to extend ongoing conversations and increase awareness and communication about literacy in health and medicine, LiteracyStudies@OSU initiated an interdisciplinary working group in 2012.

Literacy in Translation
Interest in reading, writing, and translating across languages, domains, and media extends widely at Ohio State. LiteracyStudies@OSU initiated a working group in 2013 to help foster a cross-disciplinary conversation about the theories, practices, and study of translating and translation.

GradSem: Interdisciplinary Seminar in Literacy Studies
Interdisciplinary activities and relationships play an important role in the experiences of students whose research interests and professional goals involve literacy. The Interdisciplinary Seminar in Literacy Studies, or GradSem as it has come to be known, formed in 2005 to meet this objective. The group includes students at every stage of study from across the University. The students meet monthly for lunch and a student-organized and moderated program and discussion.
LITERACY AND ITS STUDY

We take as a starting place the idea that literacy is a process that involves creating, conveying, and comprehending meaning, typically by means of a notational system, such as an alphabet. The process is complex, and the complexities are largely context specific.

What do we study when we study literacy? The opportunities include studying the acquisition, applications, claims, complexities, rates, and consequences of reading and writing in specific historical, social, cultural, political, religious, economic, and educational contexts as well as the relationship of reading and writing to other abilities and practices.

The study of literacy holds the promise of improving the flow, access to, and understanding of all kinds of information; improving communication across different domains and language groups; and improving teaching and learning in all contexts, from the classroom to the community.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDY

Coursework in literacy studies will extend the education and research experiences of any student who is interested in the broad or specific roles, relationships, processes, and products of reading and writing or who anticipates a career in a profession that involves reading and writing. These are several of the many course options:

- TOPICS IN LITERACY STUDIES (Cross-listed: CompStd 4564 and English 4584)
  Explores how our understanding of literacy and its relationships to ongoing societies, cultures, and social change has been challenged and revised. Repeatable to a maximum of 6 cr hrs.

- HISTORY OF LITERACY (Cross-listed: CompStd 4565, English 4585, and History 4585).
  History of literacy in ongoing societies and culture; emphasis on changing ideas and impacts of literacy and its acquisition, uses, and consequences.

- LITERACY AND SOCIAL ACTION (EDUTL 5305)
  Intro to the interdisciplinary study of literacy with special focus on the relationship of literacy to social action and social change, including theories of literacy, current debates in literacy studies, and links to social actions and change.

- ORALITY AND LITERACY (Cross-listed: CompStd 5668 and NELC 5568)
  Examination of major theories of writing and of oral composition and transmission.

GRADUATE INTERDISCIPLINARY SPECIALIZATION

The Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization in Literacy Studies is designed to extends the educational and research experiences of graduate students who are interested in the broad or specific roles, relationships, processes, and products of reading and writing, and who want to designate a secondary field of study.
The Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization in Literacy Studies requires 12-15 semester hours of coursework, ten hours of which must come from outside the student’s major area of study. The goals and opportunities include

- understanding literacy in its specific context
- studying its acquisition, uses, practices, and consequences
- exploring literacy’s place in relation to other modes of communication

CORE COURSEWORK (6 semester hours)
The core courses cover the foundations of literacy studies, including the central questions, histories, theories, approaches, and methods. The principal courses are INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE STUDIES IN LITERACY (English 6750) and HISTORY OF LITERACY (Cross-listed: English 7884.01 and History 7884).

ELECTIVE COURSEWORK (6-9 semester hours)
Numerous courses across the graduate curriculum focus on literacy or otherwise concern the study of making, communicating, and understanding meaning. Interested students should establish a specific emphasis and cohesive approach to the elective coursework in consultation with their faculty advisor and the specialization coordinator.

- Social and cultural histories of literacy, reading, and writing
- Literacy and language; translation; multilingualism; world Englishes
- Literacy and print media; literature; history of the book; printing, publishing,
- Literacy and the self; race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, family, and ability
- Literacy and electronic media; technology; multimodal reading and writing
- Literacy and visual media; symbol systems; visual design
- Literacy in science, engineering, and math
- Literacy in health and medicine
- Literacy in the arts; popular culture
- Literacy in the community; social work; adult education
- Literacy in the public; politics, policy, and law; citizenship and social action
- Literacy in the classroom; teaching, learning, and using reading and writing
- Literacy in the workplace and marketplace; job training; consumer education

Some of these foci are foundational in their attention to the basics of literacy studies, especially with respect to language and history, theory and practice, and their relationship to compelling questions about reading and writing across different modes and within different contexts. Other foci move into newer domains and raise timely questions about multiple literacies and, equally important, the relationship of new literacies to literacy’s foundations in reading and writing texts.

Coordinating advisor: HARVEY GRAFF 40. For more information, visit http://literacystudies.osu.edu.
Invited Lectures

Friday, September 16, 2016
ANDREW HACKER, on the math myth
Andrew Hacker, Professor Emeritus at Queens College, City University of New York, is a political scientist and public intellectual. His 2012 *New York Times* op-ed questioning current mathematics requirements led to *The Math Myth and Other STEM Delusions* (New Press, 2016). His visit is co-sponsored by the Department of Mathematics and the College of Education and Human Ecology.

Thursday, October 6, 2016
FREDRIK TYDAL, on books as “weapons in the war of ideas”
Fredrik Tydal, post-doctoral fellow at University of Virginia, Charlottesville, received his Ph.D. at Uppsala University, Sweden. He will talk about the Armed Services Editions, paperback books printed by the Council on Books in Wartime for distribution within the American military during World War II. His visit is co-sponsored by Project Narrative, Department of English.

Monday, October 31, 2016
KOLLEEN GUY, on teaching cultural history as history of literacy
Kolleen Guy is Associate Professor of History at University of Texas, San Antonio. Her area of specialization is modern European political and social history. Guy teaches European cultural history through a history of literacy. Her talk will explore an experiment in service learning with literacy as the object of service in a course on cultural history.

March 30, 2016
KATE VIEIRA, on immigrant literacies
Kate Vieira is Assistant Professor of English, Composition and Rhetoric at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and author of *American by Paper: How Documents Matter in Immigrant Literacy* (2016). Her research focuses on the social history of literacy and migration. She will talk about how migrants experience literacy.

GradSem: Interdisciplinary Seminar in Literacy Studies
*Organized by and for graduate students campus-wide*

- **September 9, 2016**  From Literacy to Literacies: Which Literacies Matter Most?
- **October 7, 2016**  Reading Practices
- **November 4, 2016**  Service Learning Literacy
- **December 2, 2016**  Designing the Job Talk
- **February 3, 2017**  Media Literacies
- **March 3, 2017**  Children’s Literacies
- **April 7, 2017**  Literacies Across Cultures

The programs are 12:00-1:30 p.m. in Denney 311. Interested? Email Michael Harwick at harwick.1@osu.edu.

Visit [http://literacystudies.osu.edu](http://literacystudies.osu.edu) for more information about events and activities.