

Where Do Genres Come From? History, Media, Culture

A course offering for the Federal University of Pernambuco
16 July–14 August 2007

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New technologies have led to a proliferation of new types or forms of discourse: newsgroups, home pages, listservs, email, blogs, wikis, online social networking, etc. Are these genres? If they are genres, how can they manifest recurrence and typification within the new technological environment of constant, rapid change? How are antecedent genres relevant? Should we understand new genres that are “imposed” differently from those that seem to arise spontaneously? In this course we will explore how to think about rapid genre change, with a special focus on the appearance of new genres and the interaction of antecedent genres, communicative media, and cultural exigence in their formation.

Week I: Rhetorical Situations and Genres

Tuesday, July 17

Bitzer, Lloyd F. 1968. The Rhetorical Situation. *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1: 1–14.

Vatz, Richard. 1973. The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation. *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 6: 154–161.

Thursday, July 19

Miller, Carolyn R. 1984. Genre as Social Action. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70: 151–176.

Assignment: Describe the three components of two recurrent rhetorical situations. Are rhetorical genres associated with these situations?

Week II: Case Studies of Genre Change

Tuesday, July 24

Jamieson, Kathleen M. 1975. Antecedent Genre as Rhetorical Constraint. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61: 406–415.

Bazerman, Charles. 2000. Letters and the Social Grounding of Differentiated Genres. In *Letter Writing as a Social Practice*, edited by D. Barton and N. Hall. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 15–29.

Assignment: How do we learn about genres from history? Describe a genre with which you are familiar and its probable antecedent genres.

Thursday, July 26

Schryer, Catherine F., and Philippa Spoel. 2005. Genre Theory, Health-Care Discourse, and Professional Identity Formation. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 19 (3): 249–278.

Zachry, Mark. "Communicative Practices in the Workplace: A Historical Examination of Genre Development." *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* 30.1 (2000): 57–79.

Assignment: How can we study contemporary, non-public genres? What are the research methods used in these studies?

Week III: New Digital Genres

Tuesday, July 31

Shepherd, Michael, and Carolyn Watters. 1998. The Evolution of Cybergenres. Paper read at 31st Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, 6–9 January, at Maui.

Yates, JoAnne, Wanda J. Orlikowski, and Kazuo Okamura. 1999. Explicit and Implicit Structuring of Genres in Electronic Communication: Reinforcement and Change of Social Interaction. *Organization Science* 10 (1): 83–103.

Assignment: What issues do the digital media raise for the use and study of genres?

Thursday, August 2

Cosio, Maria González de, and Mary C. Dyson. 2002. Identifying Graphic Conventions for Genre Definition in Web Sites. *Digital Creativity* 13 (3): 165–181.

Miller, Carolyn R., and Dawn Shepherd. 2004. Blogging as Social Action: A Genre Analysis of the Weblog. In *Into the Blogosphere: Rhetoric, Community, and the Culture of Weblogs*, ed. L. Gurak, et al. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Libraries, http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/blogging_as_social_action.html.

Assignment: Identify and describe a potential emerging digital genre.

Week IV: New Genres in Teaching and Learning

Tuesday, August 7

Devitt, Amy J., Anis Bawarshi, and Mary Jo Reiff. 2003. Materiality and Genre in the Study of Discourse Communities. *College English* 65 (5): 541–558.

Brooks, Kevin. 2002. Reading, Writing, and Teaching Creative Hypertext: A Genre-Based Pedagogy. *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 2 (3): 337–358.

Thursday, August 9

Palmquist, Mike. 2005. Writing in Emerging Genres: Student Web Sites in Writing and Writing-Intensive Classes. In *Genre across the Curriculum*, edited by A. Herrington and C. Moran. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 219–244.

Final assignment: Propose a research study or a teaching unit focusing on the emergence of a new genre—oral, written, visual, digital, or any combination.