ENGL 489-004 - Genre Theory and Discourse Analysis: Language and Writing in Political Movements  Dr. Katja Thieme

Language Majors Seminar
Term 2
F, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

In pursuit of their political goals, social movements organize themselves to a large degree around language and through text. They introduce and repeat terms with which they position themselves and others in the political landscape. They develop visions of a future world through critical concepts and alternative phrases. They organize themselves into political associations and networked groups through written genres. They interact with authorities through established as well as subversive uses of text.

In this course, we will practice language and writing studies approaches to both historical and contemporary social and political movements. We will consider genre analysis, activity system analysis, critical discourse analysis (particularly, framing), and rhetorical analysis, and linguistic analysis. You will be asked to develop a lesson to help us work with 2 articles from our required readings. In our research project you are asked to adopt one of the forms of analysis that the course introduces and will apply it to a corpus of texts that you will collect from a social or political movement of your choice.

Modules with required readings and practice analyses will include:
I. Genre theory + analysis of written genres of the North American women’s suffrage movement
II. Critical discourse analysis and framing + analysis of news reports on the gay rights movement
III. Activity system theory + analysis of genre systems during Idle No More
IV. Counterpublic and network theory + analysis of online trans rights activism

Assessment:
Commitment to class (discussion, drafts, shared annotations, research presentation) 10%
Two collaborative lessons 2 x 15%
Proposal and annotated bibliography 15%
Digital publication & reflection 15%
Research paper 30%

Preliminary list of readings:

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