The Inquiry & Innovation Seminar is designed for first year RCTE students, though others are welcome. In this course, we will examine approaches to scholarly inquiry and the role of innovation, invention, and imagination across Southern Arizona and beyond. Drawing on works from the RCTE Common Preliminary Reading List, we will consider the relationship between knowledge production, research, and writing with the understanding that intellectual inquiry and social transformation can no longer be envisioned within a single, Eurocentric tradition. The I&I seminar also sets in motion experiences and exercises to help you fulfill the Qualifying Exam Requirement and RCTE Preliminary Exam Portfolio.

Primary goals of the I&I seminar:

- assemble documents needed for your Preliminary Exam Portfolio (Specialization Statement and Comparative Cultural Requirement);
- examine a range of humanizing research methods;
- practice skills that prepare you to produce culturally relevant research and to enter the professoriate as a culturally relevant scholar;
- develop habits designed to permit a reasonable and humane balance between work and private life.

MAS 595A/495A: Mesoamerican Symbols & Culture
Drs. Damián Baca & Patrisia Gonzales
Th 4:15-6:45pm

In this course, we will examine the use of Mesoamerican symbols in the past and present and how they were, and are, utilized to express cultural survivance among Mexican/Indigenous origin peoples with ties to greater Mexico, both north and south of the border. We will look at historical uses of pre-Columbian literacies through the painted book tradition known as codices and how Mexican-origin people today use these non-alphabetic symbols in their daily lives. Learning objectives:

- Develop a basic understanding of pre-Columbian calendrical literacy
- Examine how pre-Columbian symbols may be hidden in plain sight in Mexican and Chicana/o cultures today
- Compose digital media to visually convey knowledge and research
- Build curriculum using pre-Columbian symbols
- Practice pre-Columbian symbols as community engagement

ENGL 696E—002.................................................................Stephanie Troutman
W 3:00-5:30 PM

Literacy/ies, Identity Politics & Popular Culture

This course will include academic readings in critical and feminist theory, education, and cultural studies; we will also engage in film, music and literature- as we consider ‘life as text’ and/or the idea of scripting life/lives and reading the world.
Experiential knowledge(s) and hybrid, inter and cross-disciplinary writing and inquiry will shape this seminar. Moreover, the course is intended to help students discover themselves in the process of becoming in relation to their development as researchers, teachers and writers. Together we will think through the categories described in the title- literacy/ies, identity politics, and popular culture: how do these concepts (and more specifically- the intersections they form) shape and influence individual, social and communal practice and engagement?

Additionally, students will create and present ‘proof of life’ projects- artifact based, creative, reader response. Also, students will be expected to work in teams to lead discussions and co-teach material.

The following readings will set the tone for the course:

“Identity: Skin Blood Heart” (Minnie Bruce Pratt)
“What’s Home Got to Do With It?” (Biddy Martin & Chandra Mohanty)
“Struggles in Responsibility” (Winona Laduke)
“Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities” (Stuart Hall)
“Don’t You Talk About My Momma!” (June Jordan)

***Additional requirements/considerations:

- 1-day symposium to present and workshop course paper
- Creative component/project
- 2-3 external (out of class) activities meant to enhance the learning experience

ENGL 696E-003.................................................................Cristina D. Ramírez
T 4:00 -6:30 PM
Studies in Border Rhetorics

What constitutes a border? Does a border exist only if we can actually see it?

The definition of borders is not a simple one. It requires a global perspective of the politics and debates that shape the proliferation of borders. Before tangible borders between nation states and people are built, a discourse about it is constructed. We will consider these conversations and how they lead to divisions between people.

This class focuses on defining, theorizing, and studying the various types of borders, local and global, where there exists an intermingling of ideas, identities, and politics. In class discussions, we will consider the many discursive, material, non-material, technological, linguistic, gendered, and invisible borders. Surviving in/on the “borderlands” of a culture, race, ethnicity, sexuality, or language means that identities and societal orientations are constantly being negotiated. Identities (and even policies) created within the borderlands do not conform to any one static or modernist conception. Grounded in fundamentals of rhetoric, the course goal is to consider theories from various disciplines and backgrounds that have considered the concept of crossing, blurring, or transcending borders, including sociology, political science, literature, and technology. Students will trace theories of borders from various disciplines in shorter essays, while the final project will include researching a topic in which a border/frontera of a culture, race, ethnicity, sexuality or language exists.
Matthew Abraham
Trends and Methods in Composition Studies
M 3:00-5:30 pm

This course will cover the emerging research trends and methods in composition studies by exploring how key scholars have revised and added to the central concerns about writing as a concept and process. While course coverage is intended to be both wide and specific, the readings and themes introduced will enable students to shape their specific interests in RCTE around themes of difference, exclusion, revisionist histories, and social access and mobility.

We will read revisions of composition, language, and literacy studies such as those offered in Carmen Kynard’s Vernacular Insurrections: Race, Black Protest, and the New Century in Composition-Literacies Studies, Suresh Canagarah’s Translingual Practice, Damian Baca’s Mestiz@ Scripts, Digital Migrations, and the Territories of Writing, and Amy Wan’s Producing Good Citizens: Literacy Training in Anxious Times. In addition, the course will engage contemporary interpretations of the field’s history in the wake of recent books such as Byron Hawk’s A Counter-History of Composition: Toward Methodologies of Complexity, Sid Dobrin’s Postcomposition, David Smit’s The End of Composition Studies, and Jody Shipka’s Toward a Composition Made Whole.

By the end of the course, students will develop their own research interests in a final project. Shorter writing assignments over the course of the semester will facilitate engagement with a variety of themes and contexts.