**Methodology**

**Aim of the Study**

*This section should include a brief description of the general aim of the study.*

In an effort to better understand how digital multimodal composition assignments are implemented in first-year composition curriculum this study will research how, if it all, current scholarship and theories in digital rhetoric, procedural rhetoric, and electracy inform and/or influence first-year composition curriculum. The aim of the study is to research the gap between theory and application. Specifically how, if at all, digital rhetoric, procedural rhetoric, and electracy inform digital multimodal assignments as they are implemented, taught and assessed in first-year composition courses.

I conducted a mixed methods approach to answer the research questions. The mixed methods approach includes an analysis of survey responses, interviews and documents provided by interview participants related to digital multimodal assignments in first-year composition courses to answer the following research questions:

1. How, if at all, do digital rhetoric, procedural rhetoric, and the concept of electracy influence composition curriculum and approaches to digital literacies in the field of rhetoric and composition?

2. What types of assignments and platforms allow for an attempt to combine theory and application in the composition classroom?

**Qualitative Research Approach**

Abbas Tashakkori and John W. Creswell (2007) in “Editorial: The New Era of Mixed Methods” define a mixed methods research study as “research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study” (p. 4). A mixed methods approach, using an online survey and interviewing participants based on their survey responses, was chosen for this study because it allows me to use both quantitative and qualitative methods in an effort to fully understand and answer the research questions. The intended outcome for using a mixed methods approach is to use the data collected via online survey to gain a better understanding of how universities of different Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education implement multimodal assignments in their first-year composition curriculums.

An online survey created using Qualtrics was emailed to desired participants. These participants include anyone currently teaching a first-year composition course, or the director of a first-year composition program at universities and community colleges. The survey was administered for a duration of five months. An online survey was chosen because it allowed me to reach a wider audience over a five month period. This method was selected to collect data about multimodal assignments in first-year composition courses because it provided an opportunity to compare and contrast the approaches to multimodal composition at both a programmatic and pedagogical level (find a better word?).

The surveys provided context and background for each university. **[Add examples?]** The survey questions are aimed at gaining knowledge about the types of classrooms composition classes are taught in, and the ratio of text only assignments to multimodal or multimedia assignments. This information provided me the opportunity to analyze how the classroom set up may or may not impact the inclusion of multimodal, video, and sound assignments.

Participants that indicated they would like to continue to be part of the study were considered for an interview based on their responses. Interviews were conducted via telephone from September 19 - 28 of 2017.

Seven/Nine interviews were completed.The interview questions allowed me to collect information that will assist in helping me attempt to trace the link between specific theories of digital rhetoric, procedural rhetoric, and electracy and what is practiced and included in first-year composition curriculum.

During the interview cycle participants were asked to provide the following documents, if available: assignment guidelines for first-year composition assignments, and grading rubrics. A discourse analysis of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_(add sentences about what received from interviews.)The analysis of the data collected and interviews conducted will be grounded in three categories that I will create and use as a lens for analysis (add/explain categories?) based on all relevant scholarship to the dissertation topic. Scholarship will include works in pedagogy, multimodal composition, electracy, procedural rhetoric, and digital rhetoric. This lens will allow me to analyze the syllabus, assignment guidelines, rubrics, and interview responses in an effort to determine which theories are turned into practice in the form of assignments.

**Participants**

*This section should include the following elements: (a) the participants should be defined, consistent with the Purpose Statement and the Research Questions (this should also include demographic information such as age, gender, and ethnicity) and (b) a discussion of the type of sampling with reference citations (e.g., purposive, criterion, snowball sampling technique).*

*This section should contain a discussion about participants and the site, including the following: (a) the setting, (b) the actors (who will be interviewed), (c) the events (what will the actors will be observed or interviewed doing), (d) the process (the evolving nature of events undertaken by the actors within the setting), and (e) the type or types of data to be collected (e.g., focus groups, observations, interviews, documents, audio and visual material; be specific about the strengths and weaknesses of each type).*

Potential participants were WPAs, and first-year composition instructors at Research 1 (R1) universities, R2 higher research activity universities, and R3 moderate research universities and community colleges. Surveys were distributed to universities of different research levels and community colleges in attempt to pull from a diverse group, and compare and contrast first-year curriculum at different types of research universities and community colleges. WPAs were selected to as target participants because \_\_\_\_\_(of their role as)\_\_\_\_

**Data Collection Tools**

*If established instruments will be utilized, this section will detail each data-collection instrument. The relevant information pertaining to each instrument should include the source or developers of the instrument and any other salient information.*

Qualtrics online survey software was used to create the survey distributed to first-year composition instructors and WPAs at universities and community colleges. Links to the survey were sent out in an email to WPAs at (do I list them?) and to the WPA listserv.

After analysis of survey responses nine participants were selected to be interviewed. Requests for interviews were sent to participants on (specific dates or date range?).   
Interviews were conducted via telephone. Permission was granted from each interview participant to record the interview so that it could be transcribed and analyzed. Phone interviews were recorded using the audio editing software Audacity. Interviews were transcribed using oTranscribe. Transcripts of interviews, survey responses, and raw data were downloaded and saved to an encrypted external hard drive.

**Procedures**

*The Procedures section will be based directly on the research questions (central and subquestions). Specifically, this is the “how-to” section of the study: how the data will be collected based on the questions of interest. This section should read like a*

*step-by-step recipe of how the study, beginning with IRB approval, will be conducted.*

IRB approval was given on March 6, 2017. To begin the study the online survey was created. The goal of the survey was to collect data about the curriculum of a university of community college first-year composition program. Specifically, if multimodal assignments are included in their first-year composition curriculum, if the curriculum is standard, how many multimodal assignments are taught, what types of multimodal assignments are taught, the link to the online survey was sent to WPAs from March 31, 2017 to April 7, 2017. (WPAs were chosen based on \_\_\_\_\_.) The link to the online survey was sent to the WPA listserv April 11, 2017. The online survey was open for five months, and closed on September 17, 2017. Upon closure of the online survey, responses were analyzed to identify participants for a follow up interview.   
 The survey closed with a total of 88 responses. The number of completed responses was 60, which also included two test responses, bringing the overall number of completed responses to be analyzed to 58. Qualtrics software provides numerous options to download survey reports. The responses were initially analyzed on September 17, 2017. At this time survey responses were only analyzed to select interview participants. Of the 58 completed survey responses, 21 participants indicated they were willing to be interviewed at a later date and continue to participate in the study.

Interview participants were selected based on their responses. Those selected taught in or directed a first-year composition program that included multimodal assignments in their curriculum. Their responses indicated several key factors that made them ideal for follow-up interviews. The survey responses of participants indicated that their first-year composition curriculum included one or more multimodal composition assignments that were major and/or minor assignments, and went through a change in curriculum to include multimodal assignments. Since one of the goals of the study is to research how multimodal assignments were implemented, and what scholars and/or scholarship informs their inclusion it was important to select survey participants that teach multimodal assignments and/or were part of including multimodal assignments in first-year composition curriculum.

**Data Analysis**

*Name the steps involved in conducting an analysis of qualitative data. Describe how the data will be organized and transcribed. Discuss the coding procedures of the transcripts or text files. If used, discuss specific qualitative software you will use for your analysis. Develop a detailed qualitative description. Make sure that the approach used for the study is reflective in the language used when describing the analysis. For example, a phenomenological study has specific language when describing the stages of analysis.*

**Ethical Considerations**

*This section should describe how you will maintain ethics of the study. Preserve anonymity and keep the documents secure.*

**Trustworthiness**

*This section should demonstrate aspects of the study’s validity and reliability. Why should your study be trusted? Check the accuracy of your findings and interpretation by including the following: (a) member checking—asking members to check the accuracy of the account and (b) triangulation—using corroborating evidence.*

**Potential Research Bias**

*In this section, describe your own bias of the topic, whether personal or professional. Also, you should explain the plan to manage potential bias.*

**Limitations**

I*nclude any limitations, restrictions, or constraints that may affect the dissertation outcomes.*