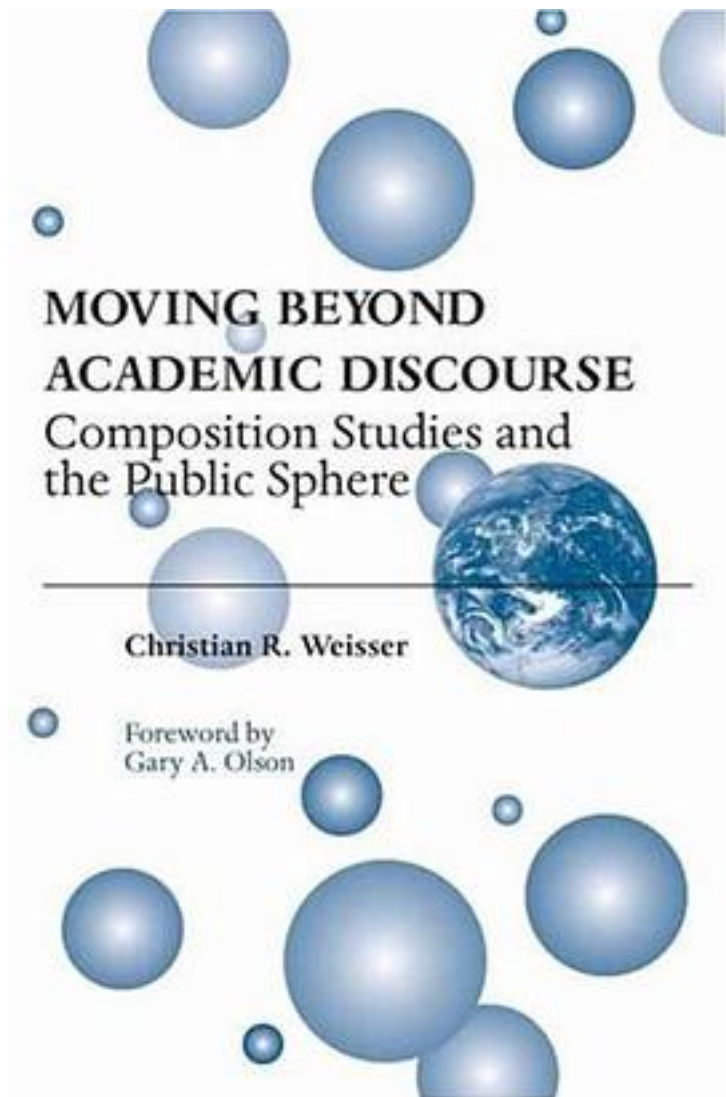


# Moving Beyond Academic Discourse



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Moving student writing beyond academic discourse and into larger public spheres is a difficult task, but Christian R. Weisser's study challenges composition instructors to do just that. This highly accessible book does what no other study has attempted to do: place the most current, cutting-edge theories and pedagogies in rhetoric and composition in their intellectual and historical contexts, while at the same time offering a unique, practical theory and pedagogy of public writing for use both inside and outside of the classroom. By positing a theory of the public for composition studies, one which envisions the public sphere as a highly contested, historically textured, multilayered, and sometimes contradictory site, Weisser offers a new approach to the roles that compositionists might assume in their attempts to initiate progressive political and social change. After first providing a historical context that situates composition's recent interest in public writing, Weisser next examines recent theories in composition studies that consider writing an act of social engagement before outlining a more complex theory of the public based on the work of Jurgen Habermas. The resulting re-envisioning of the public sphere expands current conversations in rhetoric and composition concerning the public. Weisser concludes with a holistic vision that places greater political and social import on addressing public issues and conversations in the composition classroom and that elucidates the role of the public intellectual as it relates specifically to compositionists in postmodern society.

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