**ENGL 80703: Digital Rhetorics**

**Spring 2014**

Thursday 5:30-8:10 pm SCHAR 2003

**Dr. Jason Helms**

**Reed 317c**

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**Office Hours:** TWR 10 – 11

## Course Description

This seminar will focus on digital rhetoric as theory and practice. We will read and discuss key figures and texts concerned with the theory of technology from the analytic and continental philosophical traditions and within other areas of media studies, particularly rhetoric and composition. We will also “read” digital texts – scholarly arguments written for academic conversations using a variety of modes. These will offer us a springboard for our own digital compositions. We will create digital academic arguments in using HTML 5 composing tools, positioning our arguments in relation to ongoing scholarly conversations.

In the course's final assignment, we will create an academic conversation that addresses a current scholarly conversation. We will create shorter assignments throughout the course to engage the conversations we are reading and learn how to use the technology.

## Required Texts

Below is a list of texts, some of which will be available online for free either through our course website or through another resource.

Anderson, Dan. *Screen Rhetoric and the Material World.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014. Web. (Forthcoming, available for free online)

Debord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*. London: Black and Red, 2000. Print. (and available for free online)

Deleuze, Gilles. “Postscript on Control Societies.” (pdf)

Derrida, Jacques. “Plato’s Pharmacy.” From *Dissemination.* (pdf)

Fitzpatrick, Kathleen. *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing Technology, and the Future of the Academy*. New York: NYU Press, 2011. Print.

Galloway, Alexander, Eugene Thacker, and Mackenzie Wark. *Excommunication*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2013. Print.

Gold, Matthew (ed.). *Debates in the Digital Humanities*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012 and 2013. Print and Web. (Available for free on line).

Hayles. *How We Think*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2012. Print.

Heidegger, Martin. “The Question Concerning Technology” and other selections. (pdfs)

Jockers, Matthew. *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History.* Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2013. Print and web.

McLuhan, Marshall and Quentin Fiore. *The Medium is the Massage*. Corte Madera, CA: Ginko Press, 2001. Print.

MLA Profession 2011: Special section on evaluating digital scholarship. <http://www.mlajournals.org/toc/prof/2011/>

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy*. London: Routledge, 1982. Print.

Plato. *Phaedrus*. (available for free or print, we will not require any particular translation)

Purdy, James P., and Joyce R. Walker. “Valuing Digital Scholarship: Exploring the Changing Realities of Intellectual Work.” *Profession* (2010): 177-195. Print. <http://www.mlajournals.org/toc/prof/2010/>

Rickert, Thomas. *Ambient Rhetoric*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013. Print.

Ronell, Avital. *The Telephone Book*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, 1989. Print.

Stiegler, Bernard. *What Makes Life Worth Living: On Pharmacology*. London: Polity Press, 2013. Print.

Ulmer, Greg. *Avatar Emergency*. Anderson, SC: Parlor Press, 2012. Print.

Underwood, Ted. "Digital Humanities and the Future of Literary History."

Warner, Allison Brovey. “Constructing a Tool for Assessing Scholarly Webtexts.” *Kairos* 12.1 (2007): n. pag. Web. <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/12.1/topoi/warner>

Wysocki, et al. *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*.

We will also read various pdfs and electronic journal readings from *DHQ*, *Kairos*, *Enculturation*, and *Itinerations* and others.

## Further Readings

While there will be a limited set of required readings, we will also as a group keep up a list of recommended readings. This will include some initial suggestions from me, but will be added to by you throughout the semester.

## Learning Outcomes

This course will fulfill the following English Department Graduate Course Outcomes

**English Studies Electives**

*Textual/Scholarly Production (TP)*

In ENGL 80703 students will create digital academic arguments in using HTML 5 composing tools, positioning their argument in relation to ongoing conversations in their fields. They will also identify and critique examples of digital scholarship.

*Theory (TY)*

ENGL 80703 students will read and discuss key figures and texts concerned with the theory of technology. They will produce writing that reflects an understanding of the schools being studied, connecting them to their historical contexts and current conversations.

**Rhetoric and Composition Electives**

*Digital Humanities and Multimedia (DH)*

ENGL 80703 will require students to read both digital texts and traditional texts about digital humanities and media theory. In addition, students will compose multimodal academic arguments using HTML5 authoring tools.

*Rhetoric and Culture (RC)*

Student will analyze digital artifacts primarily from a rhetorical lens with most readings taken from within the field of rhetoric and composition.

**Professionalization**

*“Students should understand how to write for publication.”*

The course's final assignment will ask students to create an academic argument that addresses a current scholarly conversation.

*“Students should demonstrate competency in using technology.”*

Students will compose shorter assignments addressing scholarly conversations and learning how to use technology, specifically Adobe Edge Animate.

## Assignments

There will be a variety of minor assignments throughout the semester. Some of these are described below and some will be assigned later.

**Kinetic Typography**

Having seen the examples in class, you will complete a short piece of kinetic typography. Choose a favorite quote and animate it using Edge Animate. I would recommend starting by learning how to use Edge Animate. Animate includes a series of tutorials that you will probably find very helpful.

Next, pick a quote. Write it down. Begin brainstorming what you might do with it. Think of ways to visualize some of the content of the quote using only text and shapes. Consider recording yourself (or someone else) reading the quote. How difficult will this be? Will it add much to the final product (compared to the amount of work it will take)? Then, get to animating! Try to take the quote apart so that the kinetic typography offers us a kind of visual analysis, showing something that wasn’t immediately obvious about the quote.

The kinetic typography must be posted to the course blog by Tuesday night (1/21). You will be responsible for commenting on three other students’ projects by class on Thursday (1/23).

**Present a piece of digital scholarship**

Go to <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/awards/pastwinners.html> and look at the various award winning digital articles for each year. Each of you has been assigned a year. Your goal will be to find an alternative winner and make an argument for that piece (if that year has finalists as well as a winner, you may not choose one of the finalists either. Imaginary bonus points for finding a non-*Kairos* article). In class on February 6, each of you will give a five to seven minute presentation on the article. Besides summarizing the article, your presentation should explain why it mattered then, why it should have won, and what relevance it has today. You will be evaluated based both on content and form. The content should answer the questions about adequately. The form should be engaging and innovative. You may use PowerPoint, Prezi, Animate, a flock of doves, the Ohio State Marching Band (TBDBITL), semaphore, or anything else you can imagine in getting your point across. If your presentation requires a digital component, upload it to the document share on ecollege before class.

In addition to presenting one webtext, you will also be the point-person for one of our readings. This assignment carries no points. By week three you will select one reading that you are especially interested in. For that reading you will do some background work. Tell us more about the author and about the piece’s exigence, audience, etc. You will not be asked to present this information to the class, but just to offer it during the discussion as necessary.

**Digital Book Review (10% of final grade)**

For this assignment you will review a recent academic book. Your review must be digital. You should aim your review at a specific journal. You must tell me the name of this journal when you turn it in. You will submit the review by posting a link as a comment to this page. The review is due February 25. You will also be responsible for commenting on at least three other projects. For ideas, feel free to see these journal websites on books for review:

**Proposal for final project**

You will compose a letter explaining your final project to me. This letter should not only explain the argument but also its form and audience. Discuss the conversation into which your project fits and the journal in which you hope to publish it. Tell me about the technology you will use to produce it and how it will be hosted. Try to foresee possible complications in terms of time. Create a schedule for yourself that will give you time to show drafts to other members of the class. Feel free to attach proof of concept documents if necessary. The letter itself should be no more than two pages. One would be preferable. The proposal is due online by March 25. You will be required to comment on three other students’ proposals by class on March 27.

**Create a rubric for digital scholarship**

Following our readings on the difficulty of evaluating digital scholarship, you will create a rubric for evaluating your own final project. Consider Warner’s work in particular. Unlike the examples we looked at, though, your rubric will include grades. Your rubric is due April 10, but I may not accept it at that time. You will revise it in conversation with me over then following week, with a firm final date of April 17. Your final project will be evaluated by me based upon your final rubric.

**Final Assignment**

For the final assignment in the class, however, you will create your own rubric (see above). The basic requirements are very broad: compose a digital argument as part of an on-going scholarly conversation and aimed at a particular journal. We will spend a good deal of time in class discussing how digital scholarship is evaluated.

## Grades

Simply fulfilling the minimum requirements of the course warrants an average grade (i.e., C). Coming to class every day and doing assignments is not something that earns extra credit or an automatic A; it’s an expectation for being in the course.

Final Numerical Grade Calculation (+/-):

| **Grade** | **Score** |
| --- | --- |
| A | 94-100 |
| A- | 90-93 |
| B+ | 87-89 |
| B | 84-86 |
| B- | 80-83 |
| C+ | 77-79 |
| C | 74-76 |
| C- | 70-73 |
| D+ | 67-69 |
| D | 64-66 |
| D- | 60-63 |
| F | 0-59 |

Your final grade will be computed based on the following weighting:

Minor Assignments 20%

Book Review 10%

Discussion 10%\*

Final Project 60%\*\*

\*You will be expected to contribute to class discussion throughout the semester. Rather than an ambiguous “participation” grade, you will receive a discussion grade out of five for every day you are present. Showing up to class gets you three points. Asking one or more question gets you another point. Offering one or more insight gets you another. This means that to receive a grade of five out of five you need to talk: both ask questions and offer your own thoughts. As this is a graduate course, I expect everyone to get full credit for this for every class period.

\*\* Evaluating digital assignments is notoriously difficult. For the final essay, you will compose a separate rubric instructing me how to grade it. You will complete this rubric in communication with me before turning in the project (the rubric will be one of your minor assignments), and it will act as a contract for your final project.

## Course Policies

**Attendance**

Regular attendance is necessary to your success in this course. Students representing TCU in a university-mandated activity that requires missing class should provide official documentation of schedules and turn in work *in advance.* **Three unexcused absences constitute grounds for failure of the course.** Absences due to illness, sleeping, and long weekends are NOT excused--they all count toward the three absences limit. Since illness is likely at some point during the semester, students are urged to save their unexcused absences for times when you are too sick to come to class. **Absences under the three-week maximum can still affect your grade adversely.** After one unexcused absences, a letter grade will be subtracted from your final grade for each additional absence (i.e.: if you are at a B and miss two classes, your grade would be a C, with three, a D, with four, an F, etc). Students whose absences are due to circumstances beyond their control may appeal this policy by scheduling a meeting with me. Generally, I do not excuse additional absences without documentation. To do well in this course, you must come to class.

**Tardies**

Please be on time for class. Students who are tardy (five minutes late or more) are a distraction to the whole class. Keep in mind that in-class work cannot be made up. ***Three tardies will equal an absence for the course.***

**Late Work**

Work will be due at the beginning of class and will be considered late thereafter. If you know you will be missing a class, you need to submit the assignment ahead of time. Note: Some due dates may not be class dates; please read the course calendar carefully. Late papers will not be excepted unless the instructor has agreed to late submission *in advance of the due date*. If you know you will be missing a class, you need to submit the assignment ahead of time or come meet with me well in advance of the due date for us to discuss the issue. *Note:* This course relies heavily on technology, so you will need to have reliable access to the internet, which is always available in several places (including the library) on campus. Problems with technology (i.e.: computer crash, printer malfunction, internet connectivity issues, etc.) are not acceptable excuses for submitting late work. Plan ahead to avoid last minute crises related to submitting assignments. Also, please note that some assignments related to this course will be submitted online through Pearson LearningStudio, and some of those deadlines will be due before the next day’s class.

**Class Conduct**Our classroom is a place for the free exchange of ideas in an environment of mutual respect. Students whose behavior distracts or disrespects others will be asked to leave and will be counted absent.

**Office Hours**   
During my office hours, I will be available to talk with you about any questions, comments, or concerns you have about the course. Please stop by and see me during these hours—that time is yours. If the hours don’t work for you, come make an appointment with me.

**Technologies**

Please silence cell phones and any other electronics during class. Texting, checking Facebook, etc. from your phone or computer means you’re not engaging in the daily activities of our course, and succeeding in the course will be difficult as a result. Failure to adhere to these policies can impact your grade for the course. Please note: unless otherwise told that you don’t need to turn in a hard copy of an assignment. When requested, you are responsible for bringing hard copy assignments—stapled, sorted (if multiple copies), and ready to be submitted—at the beginning of class.

**Pearson LearningStudio Class Website**

We have a course website we’ll use for various activities throughout the course: some required course readings will be there; discussion threads (when applicable); sharing resources on the webliography; accessing handouts for the course; and sometimes submitting course assignments to the course dropbox.

**TCU Disability Statement** (verbatim from [TCU catalog](http://www.catalog.tcu.edu/))

Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Student Disabilities Services in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 11. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-7486.

Adequate time must be allowed to arrange accommodations and accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations. *Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports to the Coordinator*. Guidelines for documentation may be found at <http://www.acs.tcu.edu/disability_documentation.asp>

Students with emergency medical information or needing special arrangements in case a building must be evacuated should discuss this information with their instructor/professor as soon as possible.

**Academic Misconduct (Sec. 3.4 from the Student Handbook):**Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the offices of Academic Deans and the Office of Campus Life. Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

* **Cheating**: Copying from another student’s test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files and listings; Using, during any academic exercise, material and/or devices not authorized by the person in charge of the test; Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or laboratory without permission; Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in its entirety or in part, the contents of a test or other assignment unauthorized for release; Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself;
* **Plagiarism**: The appropriation, theft, purchase or obtaining by any means another’s work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one’s own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another’s work without giving credit therefore.
* **Collusion**: The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit.

**TCU Resources**

* **New Media Writing Studio** | Scharbauer 2003 | [www.newmedia.tcu.edu](file:///C:\Documents%20and%20Settings\chogg\Application%20Data\Microsoft\Word\www.newmedia.tcu.edu) | newmedia@tcu.edu | 817‐257‐5194 | The New Media Writing Studio (NMWS) is available to assist students with audio, video, multimedia, and web design projects. The Studio serves as an open lab for use by students during posted hours and has both PC and Mac computers outfitted with a range of design software. A variety of equipment is available for checkout to students whose teachers have contacted the Studio in advance. See their website for more information and a schedule of open hours.
* **Center for Writing** | Reed 419 | [www.wrt.tcu.edu](file:///C:\Documents%20and%20Settings\chogg\Application%20Data\Microsoft\Word\www.wrt.tcu.edu) | 817‐257‐7221 |The William L. Adams Center for Writing is an instructional service with the mission of helping members of theTCU community improve their writing. Consultants offer feedback on writing projects to students, staff, and faculty from all academic disciplines. In addition to serving as a friendly audience, consultants address any issue a writer would like to discuss, though consultations often focus on topic generation, organization of ideas, style, clarity, and documentation. Go to their website to see their hours and make an appointment.
* **IC Computer Lab** | Mary Couts Burnett Library | [www.ic.tcu.edu](http://www.ic.tcu.edu) | The Information Commons computer lab is an open use lab available to all TCU students. Access is first come, first served, with the exception of four multimedia stations that can be reserved for use at specific times if requested. Assistance is available from the Information Commons desk staff during all open hours, with additional support from either the full‐time Computer Services Librarian or the full‐time Computer Lab Assistant during most hours.
* **TCU Computer Help Desk** | Mary Couts Burnett Library (first floor) | [www.help.tcu.edu](file:///C:\Documents%20and%20Settings\chogg\Application%20Data\Microsoft\Word\www.help.tcu.edu) | 817‐257‐5855 The Help Desk provides support for TCU related computing accounts and services.
* **Mary Couts Burnett Library** | [www.lib.tcu.edu](file:///C:\Documents%20and%20Settings\chogg\Application%20Data\Microsoft\Word\www.lib.tcu.edu) | reference@tcu.edu | 817‐257‐7117 | The Library provides resources and services for the research and information needs of the TCU community.

## Schedule

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Day | Assignments\* | Readings |
| 1/16/14 | Download Edge | Stiegler, “Doing and Saying.” |
| 1/23/14 | Simple Animate project due: Kinetic typography | Gold, Debates in the Digital Humanities |
| 1/30/14 |  | Wysocki, et al. *Writing New Media* |
| 2/6/14 | Present a piece of digital scholarship | Digital readings |
| 2/13/14 |  | McLuhan and Fiore; Debord; Deleuze |
| 2/20/14 |  | Plato; Derrida; Ong |
| 2/27/14 |  | Stiegler, *What Makes Life Worth Living* |
| 3/6/14 | Digital Book Review | Rickert, *Ambient Rhetoric; Heidegger, "Question" or something else?* |
| 3/20/14 | Blog about Ulmer | Ulmer, *Avatar Emergency* |
| 3/27/14 | Proposal for final project | Ronnell, *Telephone Book*; Galloway, et al. *Excommunication* |
| 4/3/14 |  | Warner, “Constructing a Tool for Assessing Scholarly Webtexts”; Purdy and Walker, “Valuing Digital Scholarship"; *MLA Profession 2011* |
| 4/10/14 | Create a rubric for digital scholarship | Jockers, Macroanalysis; Hayles, *How We Think* (Hayles Skype) |
| 4/17/14 |  | Fitzpatrick, *Planned Obsolescence*; Underwood, "Digital Humanities and the Future of Literary History." (Fitzpatrick Skype) |
| 4/24/14 |  | Anderson, *Screen Rhetoric and the Material World* |
| 5/1/14 |  |  |
| 5/8/14 | Final Project Due |  |

\*Some assignments will not be due on the day of class. Check assignment descriptions for specific due dates. This schedule is only meant to give an overview of which week things will be due.