

ENGL 6/7535
Special Topics in Composition and Rhetoric:
Digital Rhetoric and Writing

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Office Hours:
Mon. 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Tues./Thurs. 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
& by appointment

Course Description

In this course, we'll explore the rich intersections between recent work in the digital humanities and the field of rhetoric, composition, and writing studies (RCWS). RCWS scholars have been working in the area once called "computer-assisted instruction" since at least the 1980s. But over the past decade, the field's digital work has extended well beyond computers and pedagogical concerns. Readings in this course will cover everything from programming languages to wearables, accessibility to digital games. We'll also consider connections between digital work in RCWS and interdisciplinary fields like sound studies, software studies, and disability studies.

Also, just a heads-up that there will be a lot more tinkering in this course than in a traditional English graduate course. In addition to studying digital theories and methods, we'll work with and make things using multimedia production software, simple computer programs, microcontrollers, and more.

Course Objectives

- Introduce students to digitally oriented RCWS scholarship's established theories, methods, and debates;
- teach students to create scholarship using digital media; and
- help graduate teaching assistants develop new strategies for incorporating digital technologies into their pedagogical and professional practices.

Course Texts

Banks, Adam J. *Digital Griots: African American Rhetoric in a Multimedia Age*. NCTE/CCCC, 2011.

Eyman, Douglas. *Digital Rhetoric: Theory, Method, Practice*. U of Minnesota P, 2015. (Open-access edition available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/dh.13030181.0001.001>.)

Ridolfo, Jim, and William Hart-Davidson, editors. *Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities*. U of Chicago P, 2015.

Sweigart, Al. *Automate the Boring Stuff with Python: Practical Programming for the Total Beginner*. (Free to read under a Creative Commons license at <http://automatetheboringstuff.com/>.)

Selected articles available online and/or as PDFs.

Coursework

More details about all of the following will be provided in the first few weeks of the course.

- D2L Discussion Posts (15%): Responses to course readings and reflections on course assignments. Some kind of post will be due at the start of most class meetings. To get full credit, you must have at least 10 posts of at least 250 words apiece by the end of the course.
- Technology Literacy Narrative (10%): Short piece of writing describing your relationships to/experiences with digital technologies.
- Technology Presentation (10%): Each student will learn to use at least one new digital technology (preferably one covered by the tutorial website Lynda.com) and give an in-class presentation on the rhetorical/scholarly possibilities of that technology.
- Remediation Project (20%): Read a book-length piece of RCWS scholarship selected from a list that will be shared early in the semester, then remediate that book using a digital medium or platform of your choice.
- Python Project (15%): Based on Sweigart’s *Automate the Boring Stuff with Python*, students will find and enact one way of incorporating the programming language into their professional workflow.
- Final Project (30%): A piece of digital scholarship. Final projects can be created individually or collaboratively, and they will be accompanied by a piece of reflective writing.

Grading Scale

A: 90-100	C+: 77-79	D: 63-66
B+: 87-89	C: 73-76	D-: 60-62
B: 83-86	C-: 70-72	F: 59 and under
B-: 80-82	D+: 67-69	

Important note on grades: Because of the time-intensive nature of summer classes and the learning curve that comes with the digital technologies I’ll be asking you to learn/use in this course, I will give everyone an extension of at least a couple of weeks after the course officially wraps to complete/turn in their final projects. However, because of that extension, everyone should expect an incomplete (“I”) as their initial course grade. I will update the grade to a complete one once final projects are turned in.

Attendance

You are allowed to miss a maximum of two days of class. If you anticipate missing more for any reason, you are responsible for letting me know in advance, preferably via a face-to-face conversation during office hours. In rare cases, I am willing to make alternate arrangements involving additional coursework, but that is in no way guaranteed.

Students with Disabilities

Middle Tennessee State University is committed to campus access in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any student interested in reasonable accommodations can

consult the [Disability & Access Center \(DAC\) website](#) and/or contact the DAC for assistance at (615) 898-2783 or dacemail@mtsu.edu. If I can provide or assist with any accommodations related specifically to this course, let me know. I would be glad to help.

Course Calendar

With the exception of *Digital Griots* and pieces from *Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities*, all readings will be available as PDFs and/or open-access webtexts. Chapters from *Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities* are followed by “(R&DH).” We will not spend much time explicitly discussing Al Sweigart’s *Automate the Boring Stuff with Python* in class, but I will give you occasional class time to work through the lessons in that book. Rather than assigning certain chapters on certain days, at the start of each week on the calendar, I’ve offered general guidelines for pacing that reading.

You should come to class prepared to discuss the readings on the day they’re listed on the calendar. Bring copies of the readings with you to class. I am fine with print or digital versions.

Week 1	
<i>recommended for this week: chapters 0-2 of Sweigart’s Automate the Boring Stuff</i>	
11-Jul	<p><u><i>What Is/Was Digital Rhetoric?, Pt. 1</i></u> Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Lanham – Ch. 1 of <i>The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts</i> (pdf) • Kathleen E. Welch – Chs. 1 & 6 of <i>Electric Rhetoric: Classical Rhetoric, Oralism, and a New Literacy</i> (pdf) • Anne Wysocki and Johndan Johnson-Eilola – “Blinded By the Letter: Why Are We Using Literacy as a Metaphor for Everything Else?” (pdf) • Kathleen Blake Yancey – “Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key” (pdf) <p>in class: begin working on Technology Literacy Narrative</p>
12-Jul	<p><u><i>What Is/Was Digital Rhetoric?, Pt. 2</i></u> Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James P. Zappen – “Digital Rhetoric: Toward an Integrated Theory” (pdf) • Elizabeth Losh – Ch. 2 of <i>Virtualpolitik</i> (pdf) • Jim Ridolfo and William Hart-Davidson – Introduction to <i>Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities</i> (pdf) • Damien Smith Pfister – Ch. 2 of <i>Networked Media, Networked Rhetorics</i> (pdf) • Ben McCorkle and Jason Palmeri – “Lessons from History: Teaching with Technology in 100 Years of <i>English Journal</i>” (pdf) <p>in class: introduction to image editing</p>
13-Jul	<p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Douglas Eyman – <i>Digital Rhetoric: Theory, Method, Practice</i> (available as a digital book here: http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/dh.13030181.0001.001) <p>Due by Beginning of Class: Technology Literacy Narrative</p>
Week 2	
<i>recommended for this week: chapters 3-6 of Sweigart’s Automate the Boring Stuff</i>	

<p>18-Jul</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adam J. Banks – <i>Digital Griots: African American Rhetoric in a Multimedia Age</i> • Jennifer Sano-Franchini – “Cultural Rhetorics and the Digital Humanities: Toward Cultural Reflexivity in Digital Making” (<i>R&DH</i>) <p>in class: introduction to audio editing</p>
<p>19-Jul</p>	<p><u><i>Sound as Case Study: Is it (Digital) Rhetoric and Writing?</i></u></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cynthia L. Selfe – “The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing” (pdf) • Doug Hesse – “Response to “The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal Composing”” (pdf) • Cynthia L. Selfe – “Response to Doug Hesse” (pdf) • Steph Ceraso – “(Re)Educating the Senses: Multimodal Listening, Bodily Learning, and the Composition of Sonic Experiences” (pdf) <p>in class: work on soundscape project</p>
<p>20-Jul</p>	<p><u><i>Sound as Case Study, cont.</i></u></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joshua Gunn et al. – “Auscultating Again: Rhetoric and Sound Studies” (pdf) • Jonathan Sterne – “Sonic Imaginations” (pdf) • Trisha Nicole Campbell – “Digital Empathy: A Practice-Based Experiment”: http://enculturation.net/digital_empathy • Sean Zdenek – “Accessible Podcasting”: http://seanzdenek.com/article-accessible-podcasting/ • Browse on your own: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>enculturation</i>’s “Writing / Music / Culture” issue: http://enculturation.net/2_2/index.html ○ <i>Currents in Electronic Literacy</i>’s “Writing With Sound” issue: https://currents.dwrl.utexas.edu/2011.html ○ <i>Harlot</i>’s “Sonic Rhetorics” issue: http://harlotofthearts.org/index.php/harlot/issue/view/9 <p>in class: work on soundscape project</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p><i>recommended for this week: chapters 7-9 of Sweigart’s Automate the Boring Stuff</i></p>	
<p>25-Jul</p>	<p><u><i>Rhetoric and Coding</i></u></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massimo Banzi – “Getting Started with Arduino” (pdf) • James J. Brown, Jr. – “Crossing State Lines: Rhetoric and Software Studies” (<i>R&DH</i>) • Nick Montfort et al. – Chs. 10 (“Introduction”), 15 (“REM Variations in BASIC”), and 30 (“Regularity”) of <i>10 PRINT CHR\$(205.5+RND(1)); : GOTO 10</i>: http://www.nickm.com/trope_tank/10_PRINT_121114.pdf

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annette Vee – Introduction to <i>Coding Literacy: How Computer Programming is Changing Writing</i> (pdf) <p>second half of class in Walker Library’s Makerspace (2nd floor)</p>
26-Jul	<p><u><i>Multimedia and Multimodality</i></u> Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sara Alvarez et al. – “On Multimodal Composing”: http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/21.2/praxis/devoss-et-al/index.html Angela M. Haas – “Wampum as Hypertext: An American Indian Intellectual Tradition of Multimedia Theory and Practice” (pdf) Alexandra Hidalgo – Introduction, Ch. 1, and Ch. 3 of <i>Cámara Retórica: A Feminist Filmmaking Methodology for Rhetoric and Composition</i>: http://ccdigitalpress.org/camara/ <p>in class: Technology Presentations</p>
27-Jul	<p><u><i>Technological Transductions/-mediations/-formations, etc.</i></u> Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin – Introduction to <i>Remediation: Understanding New Media</i> (pdf) Stefan Helmreich – “Transduction” (pdf) David Rieder – Ch. 2 of <i>Suasive Iterations: Rhetoric, Writing, and Physical Computing</i> (pdf) <p>second half of class in Walker Library’s Makerspace</p>
Week 4	
<i>recommended for this week: chapters 10-13 of Sweigart’s Automate the Boring Stuff</i>	
1-Aug	<p><u><i>Digital Methods and Methodologies</i></u> Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crystal VanKooten – “Methodologies and Methods for Research in Digital Rhetoric”: http://enculturation.net/methodologies-and-methods-for-research-in-digital-rhetoric Laurie Gries – “Iconographic Tracking: A Digital Research Method for Visual Rhetoric and Circulation Studies” (pdf) Brian McNely and Christa Teston – “Tactical and Strategic: Qualitative Approaches to the Digital Humanities” (<i>R&DH</i>) Krista Kennedy and Seth Long – “The Trees within the Forest: Extracting, Coding, and Visualizing Subjective Data in Authorship Studies” (<i>R&DH</i>) David Hoffman and Don Waisanen – “At the Digital Frontier of Rhetoric Studies: An Overview of Tools and Methods for Computer-Aided Textual Analysis” (<i>R&DH</i>) <p>Due by Beginning of Class: Remediation Project</p>
2-Aug	<p><u><i>Digital/Rhetorical Spaces</i></u> Readings:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melanie Yergeau et al. – “Multimodality in Motion: Disability and Kairotic Spaces”: http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/18.1/coverweb/yergeau-et-al/index.html • Robert Kitchin and Martin Doge – Ch. 4 of <i>Code/Space: Software and Everyday Life</i> (pdf) • Keller Easterling – Introduction to <i>Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space</i> (pdf) • Casey Boyle – “Pervasive Citizenship through #SenseCommons” (pdf) • Steve Holmes – “Ethos, Hexis, and the Case for Persuasive Technologies”: http://enculturation.net/ethos-hexis-and-the-case-for-persuasive-technologies
3-Aug	<p><u><i>Digital/Rhetorical Bodies</i></u> Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne Frances Wysocki – Introduction to <i>Composing(Media) = Composing(Embodiment)</i> (pdf) • Catherine Gouge and John Jones – “Wearables, Wearing, and the Rhetorics that Attend Them” (pdf) • Christa Teston – “Rhetoric, Precarity, and mHealth Technologies” • Sky LaRell Anderson – “The Corporeal Turn: At the Intersection of Rhetoric, Bodies, and Video Games” (pdf)
Week 5	
8-Aug	<p><u><i>Rhetoric and Game Studies</i></u> Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna Anthropy and Naomi Clark – Chs. 1 & 2 of <i>A Game Design Vocabulary: Exploring the Foundational Principles Behind Good Game Design</i> (pdf) • Ian Bogost – Ch. 1 of <i>Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames</i> (pdf) • Scott Nelson et al. – “Crossing Battle Lines: Teaching Multimodal Literacies through Alternate Reality Games”: http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/17.3/praxis/nelson-et-al/index.html <p>in class: game playthroughs</p> <p>Due by Beginning of Class: Python Project</p>
9-Aug	<p><u><i>Design and Interfaces</i></u> Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristen L. Arola – “The Design of Web 2.0: The Rise of the Template, The Fall of Design” (pdf) • James E. Porter – “Recovering Delivery for Digital Rhetoric” (pdf) • Daniel Anderson and Jentery Sayers – “The Metaphor and Materiality of Layers” (<i>R&DH</i>)
10-Aug	in class: Present/Workshop Drafts of Final Projects