

Digital Literacies

B8109-3HJ

The City College of New York

Fall 2014

Wednesday, 6:45-8:35, NAC 6/150

Office Hours: Wednesday, 3:00-5:00

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Please Note: This document was designed for Web delivery. If you wish to see it live, please visit the Blackboard course site. Minor changes to this syllabus will be announced via Blackboard.

Course Description

In this course, will be investigating composition in the digital age. Students can use this course to help them think about and refine their own digital practices; all students seeking advanced degrees in arts and humanities will find this course useful in helping them think through the impacts of the digital revolution on their fields of study.

If composition has historically addressed the production of text-based essays, what could it be now that students are reading more than ever and writing for more varied audiences and purposes? What are the relationships between writing texts, status updates, and tweets on the one hand, and writing expository, explanatory, and longer creative work on the other hand? How can we make use of mobile platforms such as phones and tablets and our teaching so that they support student learning and increase student motivation? How can we take advantage of the interconnectivity that the web allows? What parts of the teaching of literacy can we move to online spaces? How can we scale our models of instruction?

We'll address both the theory and practice of computers and writing. So that we can think more deeply about changes in the way the text is produced, distributed, and received, and how these changes have affected learning and knowledge, we will read specialized and popular literature

We will also be learning or improving our practice with digital applications instead of simply moving textual production online, we'll try to rethink the relationships between information, writing, and distribution.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- **Write** essays that apply theories of language and literacy to analysis of published texts, experience, and observational studies;
- **Acquire** a strong knowledge base of major, contemporary theories of language, language learning, and literacy that inform the teaching of writing in adult literacy and college writing and reading programs;
- **Practice** using digital literacies for classroom discussions, informal learning, research, and writing;
- **Practice** critical reading of scholarship, research, and literature; and
- **Appreciate** how theoretical knowledge of language and literacy AND experiential learning about language/literacy inform their work as teachers and their students' lives as learners.

Course Policies

Attendance and Participation

Participation can be hard to evaluate since some students simply aren't comfortable speaking in class. I will do my best to accommodate reluctant speakers, but everyone is expected to participate actively in class discussions. This also means that if you like to talk in class, you might have to resist the temptation to speak so that others have a chance. I don't expect to see extended whispered conversations in the class or a general lack of engagement. Intelligent critiques of reading assignment are welcome, but the critique should be grounded in the essay and should not include general attacks on the subject or the author. Please make every effort to arrive to class on time. Lateness is disruptive. Multiple and excessive late arrivals will have a negative impact on your grade. I will alert you by email if your late arrivals are beginning to negatively affect your grade.

If you have an emergency that requires you to miss class, please contact me as soon as you can so that we can try to arrange for you to complete the course work. Unless we have made arrangements to compensate for your absences, for each class that you miss beyond one your final grade will be lowered by one full letter. If you miss four classes you will fail the class or, in rare cases, be assigned an INC.

Grades for late assignments will be reduced by one full letter for each twenty-four hour period that they are late. If an assignment due at 12:00 is submitted at 12:05, the final grade will be reduced by one full letter. If it is submitted at 12:05 the next day, the final grade will be reduced by two full letters.

Cell Phones and IMs

Please put away your phones and disconnect your IM devices during the class. Please keep them out of my sight. If you use them during class for personal reasons, your final grade will be lowered by 2% for each occurrence.

Accounts at Online Platforms

In order to complete the class, you'll need to have accounts with several online platforms (Prezi, Popcorn Maker, and others. I highly recommend that you open a Dropbox account as well). If you're concerned about privacy, I recommend that you create a Google account that you can use just for this class. You can then suspend the account and all of the other accounts when you no longer need them. You also need to check your CCNY e-mail account.

Required Texts

Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition. Anne Frances Wysocki et. al. Utah State UP: 2004.

Now You See It: How Technology and Brain Science Will Transform Schools and Business for the 21st Century. Cathy Davidson. Penguin: 2012.

Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook. Claire Lutkewitte. Bedford: 2014.

Journal articles will be provided; see the syllabus for a full list of required readings. Some articles are published in online journals.

Assignment Descriptions

Except for the blog posts, all assignments should be posted to the appropriate platform before class begins on the date the assignment is due.

10 Blog Posts (plus commenting as appropriate) to the blog or discussion board (40%)

Length: 800-1300 words. **These posts are due at 8:00 a.m. on the Tuesday before the class meets.**

The response post serves many functions: it demonstrates that you've read the text, extends your learning, and opens opportunities for discussion. The content of your response post will vary depending on the reading assignments and your reading of them. Depending on the reading assignment, you'll either want to discuss multiple readings in your blog post and make connections between them, or you'll want to focus on just one reading assignment. You should be prepared to discuss all of the assigned readings. You should take advantage of the Web platform; embed videos, images, and use hyperlinks.

There are 12 blog post assignments, but you only have to complete 10 of them. You can decide which two to skip. You can of course complete all 12 if you are so motivated. These cannot be used as extra credit or to replace other work.

Prezi (5%) Use the Prezi platform to create any presentation that will be interesting and useful to you. Have a look at Shawn Apostel's Prezi design strategies before you begin. You might want to create a Prezi from your blog post response or you might want to create a Prezi you could use at your job (including your classroom). Your goal is to create a Prezi that introduces or summarizes an idea.

Remediated Presentation (5%) For this presentation, take the material that you've presented in the Prezi and remediate it using the platform of your choice. Think creatively: PowerPoint? iBooks? Some other platform such as Reddit? See how much you can change the nature of the presentation as a result of the platform.

Rhetorical Analysis of Presentation and Remediation (5%) For this assignment, you'll want to create a rhetorical analysis of the presentation: who is your audience and what is your purpose? Why did you make the design choices you made to reach that audience and achieve that purpose? Then, you'll want to describe the changes that you made in your remediated presentation. You can use whatever digital platform you like for this rhetorical analysis.

Popcorn Maker, WeVideo, iMovie or Windows Movie Maker (10%) For this assignment, you'll conduct research on Youtube and use the videos to create a video remix on a subject of your choice. It can be anything you want—a remix that will explain a concept, a remix that presents research you've done on a topic, or something funny or sad.

Assignment Descriptions (cont.)

Digital Portfolio (20%)

You can use whatever platform best serves your purposes for the digital portfolio; I recommend Bulb, iBooks author, or Google sites. There are other platforms available including blogs with stationary pages and Weebly. The portfolio should contain links to all of the work you complete during the semester (although you'll have to use your discretion about how to include your blog posts). You should include the following elements:

- Prezi Presentation
- Remediated Prezi in the format of your choice;
- Rhetorical analysis of the remediation;
- A digital video remix project on a platform such as Popcorn Maker or WeVideo and a rhetorical analysis.
- A document that introduces the reader to the portfolio and describes the work it. This document should include an extended reflection, supported by examples from your work, about how your thinking has changed on the subject. This is not a traditional seminar paper, but you will want to include references to readings that you felt particularly helpful or compelling.

Assignment List		
Assignment	Description of Media or Activity	Grade Weight
Reading Responses	Blog Posts; Various Dates	40%
Presentation	Prezi	5%
Remediated Presentation	Your choice of media	5%
Rhetorical Analysis of Presentation and Remediation	Your choice of media	5%
Video Project	A video remix used to introduce, explain, or explore a subject. Popcorn Maker, WeVideo, a native moviemaker app, or an application of your choice.	10%
Final Presentation	A presentation to introduce, explain, or explore a subject	10%
Class Participation	Timeliness, Participation in Class Discussions	5%
Digital Portfolio and Cover Letter	Your choice of media	20%

Grading Criteria

Multi-Modal Projects

All of the assignments are multimedia projects. Strong assignments will show that you've put some time into learning the software package and understanding the relationship between the software and your message. You do not have to be an expert, but it should be apparent that you're working with the media's affordances. You should learn, for example, how to embed a hyperlink in a blog text rather than just copying the URL into the text. You should be thinking about the possibilities for design.

Blog Posts Grading Criteria

The blog post assignment is fairly loosely structured for a reason: I want you to be able to have some flexibility in your approach to these assignments because I want you to be engaged by them as much as possible. If you are really interested in one of the reading assignments and want to focus on an exploration of it for your post, everyone wins. If, however, you consistently write about just one of the assigned articles it will start to look like you're using this option because it seems like less work to you. Be sure, then, to have a variety of types of blog posts.

As a general rule, you'll want to provide a brief summary of the text and then provide an analysis of it. In the summary, make sure to describe to your readers the article's central argument or idea. If someone asked you what the article was about, what would you tell him or her? If you decide to respond to more than one text, you'll want to make connections between the various articles. You might also want to include some additional research; can you link to Web pages or videos that help clarify your point? It might strike you, though, to respond to the text in a way that covers these criteria but that I have not anticipated. Please let me know if there's some kind of response that you want to make that you don't see covered here.

In your comments on other students' posts, you'll want to ask questions and express agreement. What I would like to see is a genuine conversation taking place online. To that end, please reply to at least two posts a week.

I don't expect for you to agree with everything you read in this class, but please be respectful when you express your opinions. Comments that disparage the work such as "this was boring" or "this was confusing and poorly written" don't help me or anyone else understand what your questions are. Explain to your reader in some detail what questions the author has left unanswered. Imagine that you are building on rather than attacking the work of a classmate.

Be sure that the blog posts meet the minimum requirement; I want your responses to be fairly comprehensive. Posts should do more than refer generally and briefly to the article and then move on to lengthy, tangential anecdotes.

Grading Schema

Grades Scored Between	Will Equal	Grades Manually Entered as	Will Calculate as	
97 % and 100%	A+	A+	98.5 %	
94 % and Less Than 97%	A	A	95 %	Delete Row
90 % and Less Than 94%	A-	A-	91.5 %	Delete Row
87 % and Less Than 90%	B+	B+	88.5 %	Delete Row
84 % and Less Than 87%	B	B	85 %	Delete Row
80 % and Less Than 84%	B-	B-	81.5 %	Delete Row
77 % and Less Than 80%	C+	C+	78.5 %	Delete Row
74 % and Less Than 77%	C	C	75 %	Delete Row
70 % and Less Than 74%	C-	C-	71.5 %	Delete Row
67 % and Less Than 70%	D+	D+	68.5 %	Delete Row
64 % and Less Than 67%	D	D	65 %	Delete Row
60 % and Less Than 64%	D-	D-	61.5 %	Delete Row
0 % and Less Than 60%	F	F	55 %	Delete Row

Class Schedule	
date	reading and writing assignments
9/3	Larry Lessig et al., <i>Leaked: The Internet Must Go</i> Mike Wesch, <i>The Machine is Us/ing Us</i> Luis von Ahn, <i>Duolingo: The Next Chapter in Human Computation</i> Mark Surman, <i>Web Literacy: Building a Generation of Digital Makers</i>
9/10	danah boyd, <i>It's Complicated</i> Chapter 3: "Addiction: What Makes Teens Obsessed with Social Media?" Craig Stroupe, "Visualizing English." Richard Lanham, <i>The Electronic Word</i> Chapter 2: "Digital Rhetoric and the Digital Arts" Blog Post 1
9/17	New London Group, "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies" Dan Anderson, "Prosumer Approaches to New Media Composition: Production and Consumption in Continuum." James Porter, "A Cyberwriter's Tale." Blog Post 2
9/24	NO CLASS
10/1	danah boyd, <i>It's Complicated</i> Chapter 7: "Literacy: Are Today's Youth Digital Natives?" Mary Hocks, "Understanding Visual Rhetoric in Digital Writing Environments." Diana George, "From Analysis to Design: Visual Communication in the Teaching of Writing." Blog Post 3
10/8	Anne Wysocki, "awaywithwords: On the Possibilities in Unavailable Designs." Jeff Bezemer and Gunther Kress, "Writing in Multimodal Texts: A Social Semiotic Account of Designs for Learning." Blog Post 4 Prezi Presentations
10/15	Cindy Selfe, "Students Who Teach Us: A Case Study of a New Media Text Designer." Geoffrey Sirc, "Box Logic." Johndan Johnson-Eilola, "The Database and the Essay: Understanding Composition as Articulation." Blog Post 5
10/22	Jody Shipka, "A Multimodal Task-Based Framework for Composing." Pamela Takayoshi and Cindy Selfe, "Thinking About Multimodality." Blog Post 6

Class Schedule (cont.)	
10/29	James Surowiecki, <i>The Wisdom of Crowds</i> , "Introduction." Clay Shirky, <i>Cognitive Surplus</i> , Chapter 1: "Gin, Television, and Cognitive Surplus." Blog Post 7 Remediated Presentations
11/5	Cathy Davidson, <i>Now You See It</i> Part One: "Introduction," "Learning from the Distraction Experts," "Learning Ourselves." Blog Post 8
11/12	Lawrence Lessig, <i>Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy</i> Introduction and Part 1: Cultures (1-116). Blog Post 9 Rhetorical Analysis of Presentation and Remediation
11/19	Kathy Yancey, "Electronic Portfolios a Decade into the Twenty-First Century: What We Know, What We Need to Know." Marisa Klages and Elizabeth Clark, "New Worlds of Errors and Expectations: Basic Writers and Digital Assumptions." Blog Post 10 Video Project
11/26	Kathy Yancey, "Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key." Jim Porter, "Recovering Delivery for Digital Rhetoric." Blog Post 11
12/3	danah boyd, "White Flight in Networked Publics? How Race and Class Shaped American Teen Engagement with MySpace and Facebook." Rebecca Mead, "The Troll Slayer: A Classics Professor Fights Misogyny Online."
12/10	Presentations Portfolios