

special topics in language & rhetoric: digital rhetoric(s)

ENGLISH 403

Winter 2013

MW 8:40-10:00

Mason G444C

Melanie Yergeau
myergeau@umich.edu

Office hours:

MW 1:30-2:30 & by appt.
Angell 4204



COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

OUR COURSE TOPIC

It's no secret that we live in a highly mediated culture, always bombarded by something— the newest reality TV show, cell phone jingles in the deli, a concert ad tucked beneath a windshield wiper. Whether you pull up a web browser or fold back a newspaper, it's hard to miss references to our so-called Information Age.

This section of English 403 will introduce you to emerging conversations and theories about digital rhetoric. During our time together, we will examine the affordances and cultural contexts of multimodal documents, across numerous genres. In doing so, we'll both analyze and produce artifacts that variously employ alphabetic writing, graphic elements, still images, animation, video, and sound. As we consider what it means to be a techno-rhetorician, we'll pay close attention to issues of access and accessibility — the affordances and limitations of new media, what it means to universally design, and how certain technologies might transform (or not) our understandings of “the” rhetorical tradition.

With any consideration of new media comes a shift in rhetorical situation. For our part, then, we need to engage the following questions recursively: To whom are we writing? In what ways does the medium shape, shift, and/or become the message? How does Web 2.0 complicate our understandings of writing, and certain types of writing — research writing, expository prose, journalism, narratives, documentaries? Are we, members of English 403, researchers? Journalists? Novelists? Documentarians? Techno-rhetoricians? All of these things, and more?

PARTICIPATION & IN-CLASS EXERCISES

Good participation includes coming to class on time, active listening, completing in-class activities and peer reviews, attending conferences, being prepared to contribute your views on the assigned reading, showing a positive attitude, collaborating appropriately, and showing respect to your classmates and to me. Whether you are excused or not, if you miss a class, you are expected to make up the work. This means, if you miss on a day that involves an in-class exercise, you must make arrangements to complete the exercise on your own time.



MATERIALS

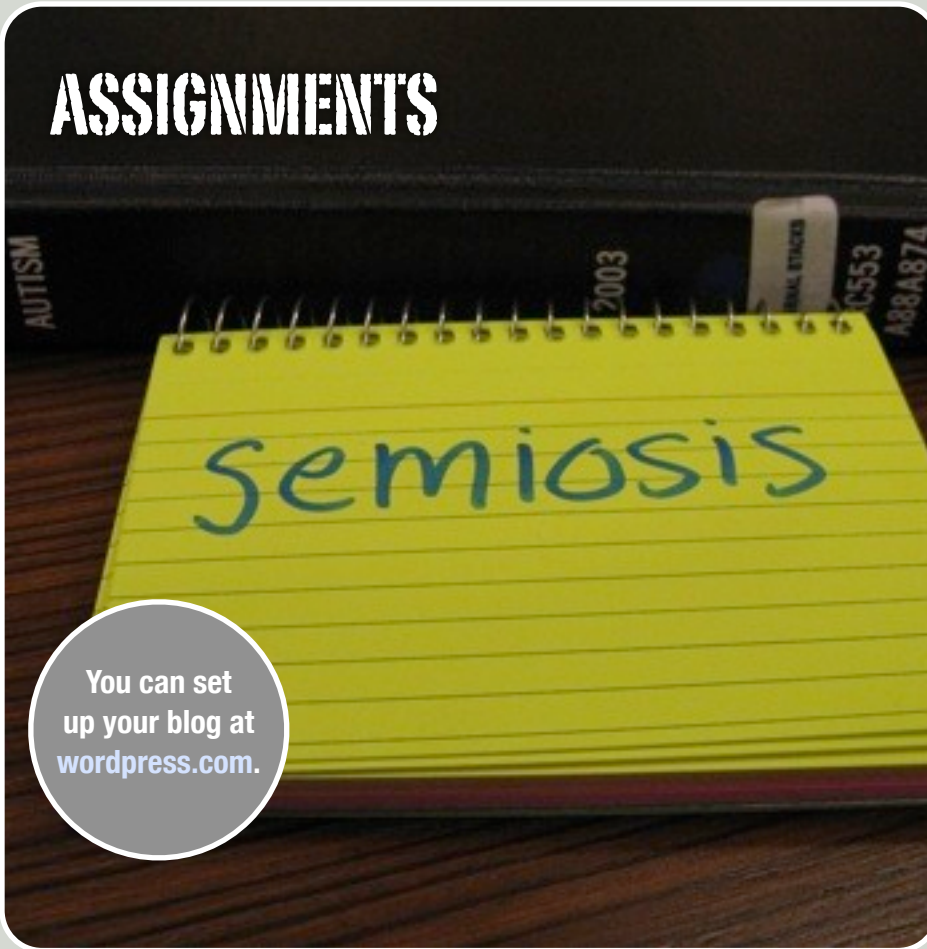
- Readings from CTools (print and bring to class)
- Drafts on workshop days
- Wordpress account (free)
- An external hard drive formatted for Mac OSX (*not* a jump drive)
- 2 blank CDs or DVDs
- Headphones that cover your ears (*not* earbuds)

APPS & SOCIAL MEDIA

We'll be using an array of social media sites this semester, all of which are free to you. Apps we may use include the following:

- Twitter
- YouTube
- Picasa
- Google Docs

ASSIGNMENTS



You can set up your blog at wordpress.com.

A note about technology
 You do not need technological experience in order to complete class projects; you will receive necessary instruction and practice over the semester. Though you're free to use software that we do not explore in class together, I won't be able to assist you with other programs.



Final versions of all assignments must be turned in on time.

Blog project (4 out of 6 posts, composed across media)
 Throughout the semester, I will pose a question or two on [our class blog](#) and ask you to post a response on your own individual blog prior to class. Additionally, I'll expect you to look over and comment on one another's posts as part of your preparation for class. Blog posts will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

Meme analysis + production
 This project offers an opportunity to analyze an Internet meme—and to translate those explorations into a composition for academic audiences. Additionally, you will create your own meme addition(s) and/or remix in support of your analysis.

Leading class discussion (collaborative)
 In groups of 2-3, you will be tasked with leading discussion for

the first 30 minutes of one class. This is *not* an assignment that involves lecture or PowerPoint; rather, this project is an opportunity to *actively* engage the class.

Reflective essays (2 take-home exams)
 Around midterm and toward the semester's end, I will pose questions about our course readings and the work you've produced to date. Your response will take the form of short essays, in which you can combine analysis and narrative.

Multimedia documentary
 This project offers an opportunity to translate your growing rhetorical understanding of digital composition, visual rhetoric, and accessibility from criticism into practice. You will produce a short, multimedia documentary on the topic of digital culture.

BLOG PORTFOLIO	MEME ANALYSIS	LEADING DISCUSSION	REFLECTIVE ESSAYS (2)	MULTIMEDIA DOCUMENTARY	REVIEWS & PARTICIPATION
20%	20%	10%	20%	25%	5%

SCHEDULE

Class cancellation policy

In the unlikely event of an emergency, I will contact you via email and request that a note on department letterhead be placed on the door. In addition, I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

Changes to the schedule

At any point throughout the semester, I reserve the right to make changes to our daily schedule. This generally happens when we fall behind due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances.



Questions?
Please send me
an email.

COURSE POLICIES

Final versions of assignments must be turned in on time

Late projects are subject to a penalty of one letter grade for each day late. Missing class or encountering technological misfortunes are not acceptable excuses for failing to meet a deadline. Save early and save often, and be sure to back up your work. I recommend that you save your work in two separate locations (e.g., save one copy to your external hard drive, and another copy on your home computer, flash drive, or CD).

Copyright and fair use

Working in digital environments poses all sorts of questions regarding copyright and intellectual property, and we will discuss these issues during our time together. While it is important to respect others' intellectual property, it is equally important to assert the right to fair use granted you by law. If you have any questions about intellectual property issues, please don't hesitate to ask.

Netiquette

Blogging will play an important role in this class. As such, you are expected to demonstrate professionalism and respect; in general, you should treat classmates online as you would like to be treated in class. Additionally, I expect you to treat your assignments with the level of formality you would use in any assignment. Please don't write a blog post as you would write a text message.

Academic misconduct

Plagiarism is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. If you are found to have plagiarized, the English Department's usual policy prescribes that you will fail the assignment and potentially the course, your case may be sent to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, and you may be placed on academic probation. Please read the [English Department's web page on plagiarism](#) carefully as well as [LSA's policies on academic misconduct](#). If you have questions about how to reference material or what constitutes plagiarism, please come see me.

Attendance & tardiness

Attendance is essential to the success of this class. Therefore, each unexcused absence after two will result in the lowering of your final grade. Excused absences include those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel for inter-collegiate athletics. Five absences may result in failure for the course.

Whether you are excused or not, if you miss a class, you are expected to make up the work. This means, if you miss on a day that involves an in-class exercise, you must make arrangements to complete the exercise on your own time. Additionally, I will count you as absent if you are more than 15 minutes late to class, sleeping, texting, emailing, and most especially, if you come to class unprepared to discuss the day's assigned readings. I reserve the right to hold pop quizzes to spot check for preparedness.



**Click here
for UM lab
locations &
hours**

RESOURCES for navigating ENG 403

Accessibility & accommodations

[Services for Students with Disabilities](#), located in G-664 Haven Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. With or without documentation, it is my intent to make our learning experience as accessible as possible. With documentation, I am especially interested in providing any accommodations that have probably been best determined by the student and an SSD counselor in advance. Regardless of whether or not you are registered with SSD, please let me know what we can do to maximize your learning potential, participation, and general access in this course. You can contact SSD at (734) 763-3000 or <http://ssd.umich.edu/>.

Writing Center

The Sweetland Center for Writing is available to provide free writing tutoring and consultation during any stage of the writing process. Services include face-to-face tutorials in 1310 North Quad and online tutorials. You can contact Sweetland at (734) 764-0429 or <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/>.

LSA Instructional Support Services

[LSA Instructional Support Services](#) provides equipment and technical support to students enrolled in LSA classes. You will be using ISS's resources extensively throughout the semester. ISS operates three centers where UM students may check out AV equipment for classroom use and for short-term loans:

Mason Checkout Center

G340 Mason Hall
Hours: 8am-10pm, M-Th; 8am-5pm, F

Dennison Checkout Center

267 Dennison Hall
Hours: 8am-6pm, M-Th; 8am-5pm, F

Media Center

2001 Modern Languages Building
Hours: 8am-10pm, M-Th;
8am-5pm, F; 12-8pm, Sat & Sun

To check out equipment, you must provide a UM I.D., along with a course title and number to support your student status. While walk-in service is available, they strongly recommend that you reserve equipment a week or two in advance. You can contact ISS at (734) 615-0100 or email them at lsa-iss-reservations@umich.edu.

Creative Commons

[Creative Commons](#) licensing enables users/producers/designers to share their work and adopt a copyleft license of their choice. Video, image, and audio files are available for public use, with proper attribution.

Opsound

Musicians upload their music to [Opsound](#), and, using Creative Commons licensing, allow users to download, share, and remix their music legally.

Audacity

[Audacity](#) is a free, open-source audio editing program that works on Mac OS, Windows, and Linux.

ONLINE RESOURCES

These websites will come in handy during our time together. Please hold onto this page for future reference.

SCHEDULE

	Topics/Activities	Reading Due	Assignments Due
Week 1: Introductions			
W 1/9	Introductions Course overview		Course technology survey
Week 2: Rhetorical theory			
M 1/14	What is rhetoric? Blog setup	Read Aristotle, Book I, Chapter 2 Read selections from Silva Rhetoricae : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Is Rhetoric? • Encompassing Terms • Persuasive Appeals 	* Find a video or image that furthers your understanding of rhetoric. Post to your blog.
W 1/16	Rhetors (and robots?)	View Wesch, The Machine is Us/ing Us View What Is Object-Oriented Rhetoric? Read Silva Rhetoricae, The Canons of Rhetoric	Blog post #1
Week 3: New media / Old media			
M 1/21	NO CLASS		
W 1/23	Remediation What is new media?	Group A: Read selections from Manovich, <i>The Language of New Media</i> Group B: Read Bolter, Hypertext and the Remediation of Print Everyone: View Medieval Helpdesk	* Bring questions and talking points about the material you read.

Week 4: Audience			
M 1/28	Audience and/as authorship Interactivity	Read Jenkins, Interactive Audiences Read Zappen, Digital Rhetoric	Blog post #2
W 1/30	Workshop: Audio narratives	Read Journalism 2.0, "Digital Audio and Podcasting" Listen to 2 stories of your choice from StoryCorps	
Week 5: Going viral			
M 2/4	Meme theory Introduce Meme Analysis assignment	Read/View Pfister, Hitler Finds Out About the Downfall Parodies Read Gleick, What Defines a Meme? Read Shifman, An Anatomy of a Youtube Meme	* Start looking up memes. Bring an example to class, something you might analyze for your project.
W 2/6	Rhetoric and/as contagion	Knobel & Lankshear, Online Memes, Affinities, and Cultural Production	
Week 6: Authorship			
M 2/11	Workshop: Peer review Sign up for conferences		Rough draft of Meme Analysis due
W 2/13	What does it mean to <i>author</i> ?	Read McPherson, Self, Other, & Electronic Media	

Week 7: Arrangement			
M 2/18	Multimodality & figures of order Schemes of repetition Distribute Midterm Reflective Essay Exam	Read/View Delagrange, Wunderkammer, Cornell, and the Visual Canon of Arrangement	* Find a multimodal example of a rhetorical figure(s) . Final draft of Meme Analysis due
W 2/20	Individual conferences	NO CLASS	
Week 8: Visual rhetoric			
M 2/25	Visual rhetoric Digital photography	Read McCloud, selections from <i>Understanding Comics</i> Read Wroblewski, "Visible Narratives: Understanding Visual Organization"	* Bring digital camera if you own one.
W 2/27	Workshop: Photoshop	View Pecknold, A Stop-Motion History of the GIF Read Murphy, U of California Introduces a Modern Logo	
Week 9: Winter break			
M 3/4	NO CLASS		
W 3/6	NO CLASS		
Week 10: Community			
M 3/11	Blogs, fora, & social media	Read Turkle, The Flight from Conversation	Midterm reflective essay due by 11:59pm on 3/11
W 3/13	Workshop: Video recording	Readings TBD	

Week 11: Convergence & connections			
M 3/18	Forging connections Introduce Multimedia Documentary project	Read Jenkins, selections from <i>Convergence Culture</i>	Blog post #3
W 3/20	(Mediated) poetics Workshop: Video, part 2	View Anderson, I'm a Map, I'm a Green Tree	
Week 12: Accessibility			
M 3/25	Audience, access, & accessibility	Read Slatin, "The Art of ALT: Toward a More Accessible Web" Read OSU Web Accessibility Center, "Images and Multimedia"	Blog post #4
W 3/27	Universal design Studio time: Proposal workshop	Read Dunn & Dunn de Mers, "What Is Universal Design?" Explore Center for Universal Design web site	
Week 13: Intellectual property			
M 4/1	Fair use, copyright, & intellectual property Video editing tutorial, part 2	Read selections from <i>Bound by Law</i> View " A Fair(y) Use Tale "	Documentary proposal due
W 4/3	Documentary as methodology	Read Juel, "Defining Documentary Film" View Autism Reality and one documentary video of your choice from Media That Matters Film Festival	Blog post #5

Week 14: Invention & delivery			
M 4/8	Re-imagining the canons	Read Garrett et al., Reinventing Invention	
W 4/10	Workshop: Interviewing Studio time	Read Hampe, "Ethics and Documentary Film"	Blog post #6
Week 15: Collaboration			
M 4/15	Studio time & break-out groups		
W 4/17	Studio time & break-out groups	Read WAC's "Captioning YouTube Videos"	
Week 16: Digital theory			
M 4/22	Presentations		Documentary project due
Finals week			Final reflective essay due