

ENG 6800: Intro to Texts and Technology

Section 0001, Course # 91882, 3 credit hours

Fall 2009, W 7:30-10:20pm, CNH 203

Professor Blake Scott
407-823-2212
bscott@mail.ucf.edu

411K CNH
W 6-7, Th 4-5,
and by appt.

Overview

This course will introduce you to some of the basic concerns, concepts, and methods in the emerging interdisciplinary area of Texts and Technology. Although we will discuss various approaches to T&T, we will focus on the impact of “new media” on our concepts and practices of literacy/electracy, including pedagogical, artistic, workplace, and leisure-based communicative practices. We will explore how shifting relationships among media and our use of them shape our views of texts, writing, authors, users, identity, community, and other elements of our lives as communicators.

The course’s assignments are designed to prepare you to succeed in the program (in coursework, exams, and projects) and in your scholarly pursuits. To this end, we’ll spend some time on professionalization activities (e.g., how to give a conference presentation or write a book review) and on engaging intellectual communities beyond our campus.

We will use a blog to extend our inquiry online, share work with others, and keep track of our collective work. The blog URL is <http://eng6800.wordpress.com/>. From time to time, we might also use tools on our Webcourses site.

Course Objectives

- Learn about the diverse work in T&T, and form a working definition of this scholarly area and the practices it can inform.
- Become more familiar with program policies and expectations as well as professional presentation and publication strategies.
- Engage in scholarly conversation about the course texts and concepts they take up, in the process improving interpretation, writing, and argumentation skills.
- Apply course concepts and methods in a scholarly argument about a specific type of T&T interaction.
- Begin to develop future T&T project ideas, including the possible publication and/or use of the final project.
- Use new media to better understand and teach the ways these media rearticulate communication forms and processes.

Required Texts

The following books (available at the UCF Bookstore) are required. See the schedule for the parts of each book on which you should focus your reading.

- Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*
- Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*
- Manovich, Lev. *The Language of New Media*
- Brooke, Collin. *Lingua Fracta: What We Teach When We Teach about Literacy*

- Hayles, N. Katherine. *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary*
- Turkle, Sherry. *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*
- Lessig, Lawrence. *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy*
- Grabill, Jeffrey T. *Writing Community Change: Designing Technologies for Citizen Action*

As a class, we will also read selections (available as pdf files on our WebCourses site; books on reserve):

- Landow, George P. *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization*
- Haraway, Donna J. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*

Assignments and Grading

Major Assignments and Percentage of Overall Grade

1) Responses and Practicums	20%
2) Interview and Report	5%
3) Presentation and Handout	20%
4) Professionalization Plan	5%
5) Final Paper (including concept map)	30%
6) Class Participation	20%

Grading Criteria

For most major assignments, I will use a plus-minus letter grade based on a holistic assessment. If I use a more specific grading rubric, I will let you know ahead of time. In addition to criteria specified on assignment descriptions, I will use the following guidelines to evaluate your work:

- An *A* text makes a sophisticated, polished argument and a persuasive, insightful contribution to a conversation about the relationship among texts and technologies. It is exceptional in its fulfillment of assignment criteria and execution of textual elements (i.e., development, arrangement, style, delivery). It has no major flaws.
- A *B* text is well-conceptualized, well-crafted, and solidly argued. It is generally above average in its fulfillment of assignment criteria and execution of textual elements, but it falls short in one area.
- A *C* text makes a competent, adequately crafted argument and contains all required elements. It is generally average in its fulfillment of assignment criteria and execution of textual elements, but it has multiple flaws.
- A text earning *C-* or below is poorly conceptualized and crafted. It fails to contain required elements.

Assignment Descriptions

1) Responses and Practicums

Responses to readings will be graded, so compose them with care. They should be 500-750 words (though they can include images), should be posted on the course blog by 1pm on the day of class, and should have a descriptive subject line. Each response should not simply be a summary but should demonstrate substantial engagement with the reading (documented with citations of specific pages or URLs), relating it to your views, experience, or scholarly interests. In addition, your response should be self-reflexive, meaning it should explore *why* you responded the way you did. As long as it engages the reading, your response can also extend a discussion started by a classmate, in which case you would reply to her/his response. Because we will use responses to guide our in-class discussion, your response should include at least one specific question about a key concept from the reading. You can skip the response on the date of your presentation.

Some practicums, or short “application” exercises, will be assigned and completed in class, and others will take the place of that week’s response. Some will focus on the readings, and others will focus on professionalization.

2) Interview and Report

For this mini assignment you will interview (via phone, email, or in person) one T&T faculty member or an affiliated member from another program or department. The goals are to get a better sense of T&T as an interdisciplinary scholarly area and to get to know faculty with whom you may eventually want to work. Out of your interview, you’ll develop a 2-3 page report, in memo format, that explains the faculty member’s take on T&T and his/her T&T-related work (published and ongoing).

3) Presentation and Handout

Working individually or in pairs, you will make a 20-40 minute oral presentation (not including discussion; 20-25 minute for individual, 30-40 for pairs), accompanied by handout and/or electronic text (~2-3 pages), about a supplementary reading (possibilities listed below). I advise rehearsing the presentation, as I will enforce the time limit. The handout or electronic text should be designed as a reference tool to assist your classmates in developing ideas and locating sources for projects as well as studying for comprehensive exams. I encourage you to be creative with the form of your presentation and accompanying text. Hands-on activities are welcome.

The purpose is not to give a straight book report but to aid yourself and others in navigating a continued exploration (depending on each person’s interests). After briefly situating the book and author in a scholarly conversation, the presentation and accompanying text should explain key concepts/methods/applications from the book, relate the book to others that we’ve read, and explore how the book’s ideas might be useful to T&T scholarship (including your own). Your handout/text should include a brief bibliography and end with 3-5 well-formulated questions to guide our discussion. I’ll expect you to be the primary facilitator of the discussion following your report.

Books for Reports:

- Scribner, Sylvia, and Michael Cole. *The Psychology of Literacy*
- Bolter, Jay David, and Richard Grusin. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*
- Ulmer, Gregory L. *Internet Invention: From Literacy to Electracy*
- Manovich, Lev. *Software Takes Command* (available for download at <http://lab.softwarestudies.com/2008/11/softbook.html>)
- Rice, Jeff. *The Rhetoric of Cool: Composition Studies and New Media*
- Murray, Janet H. *Hamlet on the Holodeck*
- Stone, Allucquère Rosanne. *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age*
- Tapscott, Don, and Anthony D. Williams. *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*
- Johnson, Robert R. *User-Centered Technology: A Rhetorical Theory for Computers and Other Mundane Artifacts*

4) Professionalization Plan

For this mini assignment, you’ll develop a two-page explanation, in memo format, of three professionalization activities you plan to pursue over the next year.

5) Final Paper

In this final assignment, you will individually write a scholarly paper that synthesizes ideas from course readings (and beyond) and makes an argument about a specific set of new media practices. The paper

should target a specific scholarly forum and ongoing conversation in that forum. It can be in print or hypertext form, depending on the forum. It should be slightly longer than conference length (12-15 double-spaced pages) and include an abstract (100-150 words).

As part of your invention, you will create a concept map that shows relationships among concepts related to the key question(s) of your project. Your map should incorporate ideas from at least three readings outside of the course. I'll recommend several tools for developing your map electronically. Also, you must register your resources for the final project on <http://del.icio.us/>, <http://citeulike.org/>, or another Web-based citation networking site to facilitate conversation with scholars beyond our campus.

Course Policies

- I am always happy to meet with you about the course or your larger T&T program of study. If my office hours are not convenient for you, we can certainly schedule alternative times to meet in person or virtually (via an IM tool).
- We will mostly follow the syllabus and schedule, but they are subject to minor changes, about which I will apprise you asap.
- In order for the class to be a success, you must be well prepared for and actively engaged in all class meetings. I will take notes about your level of preparation and participation.
- Because this is a discussion-oriented class, attendance and punctuality are crucial. Beyond affecting your participation grade, missing more than one class will result in your overall course grade being lowered. Missing more than two classes will likely cause you to fail the course.
- All UCF students are responsible for upholding standards of academic integrity as explained by The Golden Rule (<http://www.ucf.edu/goldenrule>). When it amounts to academic dishonesty, plagiarism can have dire consequences such as failing a paper or the course.
- As a rule, except in cases of documented medical emergencies, I will not accept late assignments or papers, and I will not grant extensions or incompletes.
- Students with disabilities will be fully accommodated in this course. Please let me know at the beginning of the term about any such needs, and I will make adjustments and help you locate resources to aid your performance in the course.

Schedule		
Date	Topics and Activities	Readings and Assignments Due
August 26	<i>Course Introduction</i> Program and professionalization overview; syllabus and assignments overview; T&T definition; interview assignment invention	Review <i>Ph.D. Student Handbook</i> and faculty profiles on T&T website (http://www.english.ucf.edu/graduate/tandt.php)
Sept. 2	<i>Technology, Consciousness, Literacy</i> Ong; Scribner and Cole presentation; professionalization	Ong; response due
Sept. 9	<i>Convergence and Remediation</i> Jenkins; Bolter and Grusin presentation	Jenkins; practicum due
Sept. 16	<i>Language of New Media</i> Manovich discussion; interview reports; concept maps	Manovich; response due; interview report due
Sept. 23	<i>Language of New Media and Electracy</i> Manovich; Ulmer presentation	Manovich; initial concept map due
Sept. 30	<i>Hypertext and Electracy</i> Landow; final project invention	Landow; response due
Oct. 7	<i>Rhetoric of New Media</i> Brooke; Rice presentation	Brooke; practicum due
Oct. 14	<i>Electronic Literature</i> Hayles; Murray presentation; professionalization	Hayles; practicum due
Oct. 21	<i>Technology and Identity</i> Turkle; Stone presentation; final project discussion	Turkle; response due
Oct. 28	<i>Technology and Commerce</i> Lessig; Tapscott and Williams presentation	Lessig; project plan due
Nov. 4	<i>Technology and Political Action</i> Grabill; Johnson presentation	Grabill; practicum due
Nov. 18	<i>Technology and Political Action</i> Haraway; final project invention	Haraway; professionalization plan due
Dec. 2	<i>Final Project Invention</i> Concept maps workshop; final project workshop	Revised concept map due; project draft due
Dec. 9	<i>Final Exam Period</i> Final project presentations; final exam on professionalization; course evaluation	