

ENG 6800: Introduction to Texts and Technology

Section 0001, Course # 90370, 3 credit hours

Fall 2013, M 6:00-7:15pm, CAH-190 (Conference Room)

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and by appointment

Overview

This course will introduce you to some of the basic concerns, concepts, and methods in the emerging interdisciplinary scholarship of Texts and Technology (T&T). 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.

In addition to engaging with theoretical content from a variety of scholars working in T&T-related fields, we will also learn applied skills this semester that will aid in our understanding and application of digital theories and methodologies. Specifically, we will learn how to build, deploy, and critique interactive projects on the World Wide Web and how to use basic Internet technologies to build and maintain online digital projects. Students will develop and maintain their own web sites on the student T&T server and add digital essays in which they engage with the reading materials over the course of the semester. Our approach to understanding digital scholarship will be experimental and ambitious; expect to learn some basic digital literacy skills, but also expect to revise and iterate through different ideas as they evolve with your knowledge and interests. These digital projects will also be linked to from personal student web sites.

We will use a course website (online via Canvas) to extend our inquiry online, share work with others, and keep track of our collective work. This website will contain copies of our major assignments, example code and tutorials, and links to student projects. Technical tutorials and online discussion postings will be deployed on our official Webcourses site. Webcourses is additionally available from the "Online Course Tools" of your MyUCF panel. Students are encouraged to make use of the "Questions for the Instructor" forum thread for any questions about assignments or course materials. They can also use the "General Student Discussion" forum thread to interact with classmates. For general help with Webcourses or logging into your account, see <http://learn.ucf.edu/>.

Course Objectives

- Learn about the numerous interdisciplinary fields that inform and influence the field of texts and technology.
- Recognize pioneers of digital technology and new media and learn how those pioneers reshaped our ideas about textuality over the years.
- Engage in scholarly conversation about the course texts and concepts they take up, in the process improving interpretation, writing, design, and argumentation skills.
- Understand and apply digital literacy techniques to develop scholarly textual and interactive projects for the World Wide Web.
- Solve problems using interactive media tools and resources.
- Explore ideas and juxtapositions of critical theory and technology for use in your thesis, your publications, or future project coursework.
- Use new media to understand and teach the ways media rearticulate communication forms and processes.

Required Texts

The following two books are required. See the schedule for the dates on which these readings are due. In addition, each student will pair with another student in the course and will be responsible for delivering a presentation on the readings for a given week. As a group, that team will develop and deliver a roundtable presentation on those readings to the class. Additional notes and readings will be noted on our course web site.

- Jenkins, H. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. Available: <http://www.amazon.com/Convergence-Culture-Where-Media-Collide/dp/0814742955/>.
- Wardrip Fruin, N., & Montfort, N. (eds.) *The New Media Reader*. Available: <http://www.amazon.com/The-Media-Reader-Noah-Wardrip-Fruin/dp/0262232278>.

Assignments and Grading

Major Assignments	Percentage of Overall Grade
1) Technical Tutorial	10%
2) Digital Projects and Essays (5 total)	50%
a. Project 1: History – Create a new media project to explain or analyze a historical event	
b. Project 2: Visualization – Create an information visualization to inform or persuade	
c. Project 3: Networks – Create a new media project that employs networks	
d. Project 4: Narrative & Play – Design a simple game or interactive project using narrative	
e. Project 5: Surveillance – Design a project that explores the notions of privacy or surveillance	
3) Roundtable Reading Presentation	20%
4) Class Participation (Includes Online Forum Postings)	20%

*Email Policy

This is the best way to contact me. I do my best to answer all emails within 48 hours and I can generally respond much sooner. I will send occasional emails about the course to your officially registered @knights email address stored in MyUCF. It is your responsibility to check your @knights email frequently throughout the semester. When sending me email, please include the course prefix and course number in the subject line of your email. For example, for this course your subject line should include the text *eng6800* in all email you send me regarding this class. Due to aggressive spam filters, I may not receive any email that arrives without this formatted subject line. I would prefer that you email me directly to rudy@ucf.edu rather than using the Webcourses built-in mail system. However, I will also try to check that account. It just may not be as frequently.

Late Assignment and Incomplete Policy

Late assignments will not be accepted in this course unless you have a documented medical emergency or supernatural experience. If there is an emergency in your life you should come talk to me about it as soon as possible – do not wait until the end of the semester to tell me about a situation that has happened four weeks prior. In that case, I can't do anything to help you complete your work. There will be no makeup quizzes or assignment extensions for leisure travel, vacations, or other non-emergency situations. You can always turn in an assignment early. Computer failure is also not a satisfactory excuse for not turning in your project. Consider automated, cloud-based backup services like Carbonite or Dropbox. You need to make frequent and numerous backups of your data throughout the semester. See UCF policy 4-401 for the makeup of authorized UCF events or co-curricular activities. <http://policies.ucf.edu/>. I will not grant extensions or incompletes.

Technology Policy

Outside class, students are required to have access to word processing software and a Mac or PC computer with access to the Internet. During class, students may find use in working with technology to take notes, experiment

(during appropriate class discussions), show examples, etc. It is expected that these technologies will not be used during class for purposes outside the scope of discussion, including instant messaging classmates, texting, e-mail, Facebooking, video games (outside of their use as examples to support particular arguments). Please feel free to use any device that makes your participation in class discussions easier. Please do not leave your cell phones on audible ring, and barring emergencies, do not take or make phone calls during class. In other words, be courteous to your instructor and your peers.

Other 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.
- We will mostly follow the syllabus and schedule, but they are subject to minor changes, about which I will apprise you ASAP during normal class meetings or by email.
- In order for the class to be productive, you must be well prepared for and actively engaged in all class meetings. Your level of preparation and participation will determine your participation grade in the course.
- Because this is a mediated (M-model) class, attendance and punctuality are crucial. You should check our online course shell several times a week and be prepared during face-to-face classroom time. Beyond affecting your participation grade, missing more than two F2F classes will result in your overall course grade being lowered a letter grade. Missing more than three 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 entire course.
- Students with disabilities will be 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.

Tentative Schedule

Week	Date	Topics and Activities	Readings (due by next week) and Assignments (due on day noted)
1	August 19	Welcome and Introduction to the Course Review of Syllabus Student Introductions	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 3-25 <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Jenkins p. 1-24 <input type="checkbox"/> Complete this HTML tutorial: http://www.jneuhaus.com/write.html <input type="checkbox"/> Begin technical tutorial
2	August 26	The Roots of New Media Model Roundtable	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 29-72 <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Jenkins p. 25-58 <input type="checkbox"/> Continue technical tutorial
3	Sept. 2	No Class (Labor Day Holiday) (see online course page for additional assignments/instructions)	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 73-126 <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Jenkins p. 59-94 <input type="checkbox"/> Technical tutorial due

Week	Date	Topics and Activities	Readings (due by next week) and Assignments (due on day noted)
4	Sept. 9	Historical Precedents Roundtable Slot #1	<input type="checkbox"/> Digital Project/Essay #1 due <input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 127-192 <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Jenkins p. 95-134
5	Sept. 16	The Roots of Procedural Literacy No Class (Virtual Meeting) (see online course page for additional assignments/instructions)	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 193-246 <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Jenkins p. 135-174
6	Sept. 23	Art and Media Roundtable Slot #2	<input type="checkbox"/> Digital Project/Essay #2 due <input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 247-338 <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Jenkins p. 175-216
7	Sept. 30	Digital Media, Part I Roundtable Slot #3	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 339-412 <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Jenkins p. 217-250
8	Oct. 7	Digital Media, Part II Roundtable Slot #4	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 413-498 <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Jenkins p. 251-294
9	Oct. 14	Design, Part I Roundtable Slot #5	<input type="checkbox"/> Digital Project/Essay #3 due <input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 499-562
10	Oct. 21	Design, Part II Roundtable Slot #6	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 563-612
11	Oct. 28	Revolution, Part I Roundtable Slot #7	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 613-662
12	Nov. 4	No Class (Virtual Meeting)	<input type="checkbox"/> Digital Project/Essay #4 due <input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 663-704
13	Nov. 11	No Class (Veteran's Day Holiday)	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 705-760
14	Nov. 18	Revolution, Part II Roundtable Slot #8	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: NMR p. 761-802
15	Nov. 25	Final Presentations, Part I	<input type="checkbox"/> Digital Project/Essay #5 due
16	Dec. 2	Final Presentations, Part II	Congratulations on completing the course! Have a great Winter Break.