ENG 6801
Texts and Technology in History

> I began, in 1949, with only electro-countable machines with punched cards. My goal was to have a file of 13 million of these cards, one for each word, with a context of 12 lines stamped on the back. The file would have been 90 meters long, 1.20 m in height, 1 m in depth, and would have weighed 500 tonnes.
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> In his mercy, around 1955, God led men to invent magnetic tapes. The first were the steel ones by Remington, closely followed by the plastic ones of IBM. Until 1980, I was working on 1,800 tapes, each one 2,400 feet long, and their combined length was 1,500 km, the distance from Paris to Lisbon, or from Milan to Palermo. I finished in 1980 (before personal computers came in) with 20 final and conclusive tapes . . . and prepared for offset the 20 million lines which filled the 65,000 pages of the 56 volumes in encyclopedia format which make up the *Index Thomisticus* on paper.
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> The third phase began in 1987 with preparations to transfer the data onto CD-ROM. The first edition came out in 1992, and now we are on the threshold of the third. The work now consists of 1.36 GB of data, compressed with the Hufmann method, on one single disc.

> Father Roberto A. Busa, humanities computing pioneer, on how he created the *Index Thomisticus*, a concordance to the works of St. Thomas Aquinas (*A Companion to Digital Humanities*, 2004)

Course Description and Goals

This course aims to examine the relationship between texts and technology in Western culture. Beginning with the emergence of writing as means of communication, this course will examine the history and role of science, technical inventions, and print as they intersect with written forms of communication and the production, for instance, of literature. In particular, the course will examine the impact of the Internet on culture and the social, rhetorical, and theoretical issues that new media present producers and consumers of texts.

As such, the course has the following goals: *first*, to understand and appreciate the history of invention and technologies such as the printing press over time; *second*, to investigate the many forms of "texts" as they emerge in the modern period and are altered by digital media; *third*, to gain practice in close reading and critical analysis through class discussion and the writing, for example, of a book review or a research paper that might be expanded and submitted to a traditional or electronic journal; and *fourth*, to gain experience in the intellectual synthesis of course readings and perspectives; and, *fifth*, to reflect on materials and the world around us in self-critical ways. In all of these goals, the aim of the course is to be as practical and relevant as possible in understanding how texts and technologies have historically intersected with, and influenced, one another—and how that convergence continues, for better or for worse, to be a shaping influence on culture today.

(Note about prerequisites: acceptance into the doctoral program, graduate standing, or instructor approval required.)

Texts

(required)

Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Thomas J. Misa, *Leonardo to the Internet: Technology & Culture from the Renaissance to the Present*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2004.

Ronald J. Deibert, *Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia: Communications in World Order Transformation*. New York: Columbia UP, 1997.

Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*. Second Edition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001

Lauren Rabinovitz and Abraham Geil, *Memory Bytes: History, Technology, and Digital Cutlure*. Durham: Duke UP, 2004.

Jerome McGann, *Radiant Textuality: Literature after the World Wide Web*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Lawrence Lessig, *Free Culture: The Nature and Future of Creativity*. New York: Penguin, 2004.

(recommended)

Susan Screibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth. eds. *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.

Requirements

1.) **Participation**: 10% of grade.

Participation means being in class and "actively learning," i.e., engaging with reading materials, the teacher, and one's peers. It means raising questions, sharing insights, and actively and respectfully interacting with others, etc.—i.e., being part of a "learning community." It means being right about something, wrong, and everything in-between. It means challenging yourself to speak publicly on occasion, and it means knowing when to listen and to let others share their views. Simply being in class, then, on a regular basis will earn you a "C+." Active participation or improvement in this area will earn you a higher grade as will the thoughtful questions and answers. Participation in small and large group discussions or even online (WebCT) are opportunities for you demonstrate your interest in, and knowledge of, the material—and to exchange perspectives and views. Most students are able to earn a "B" or higher.

2.) **Class Discussion and Report**: 15% of grade

Every week, someone will lead class discussion reading and someone will provide a report on a current technology trend or event. Leading class discussion involves coming to class with a list of questions and issues, on a handout, that are relevant to the reading assignment and can serve as a basis for discussion. Although I will comment on the reading and discussion itself, you will be primarily responsible for facilitating discussion of the material's main points.

Near the end of each class meeting, someone will share information about current technology developments as they relate to texts, related media, and issues discussed in class. One such example might be Google's announcement in 2004 of a partnership with the University of Michigan to digitize 7,000,000 volumes of library materials for public access and the reasons for doing so. If available, it will be useful to use some form of media, e.g., the Internet, to illustrate this information and its relevance to the class.

Your performance with class discussion (10%) will be combined with your report (5%). The purpose of both of these assignments is to provide practice in analyzing and synthesizing reading materials alongside ongoing contemporary events or developments.

3.) **Course Portfolio**: 60% of grade (100 points total). This component of the course includes a chapter abstract, book review, and research essay—types of writing that are practical and applicable in terms of process and professional product.

- 350-400 word chapter abstract from Ong (10 points)
- 4-5 page book review of Misa or Diebert (25 points)
- 10-12 page research essay on topic of your choice (60 points)
- Semester course reflection (5 points)

Late work is not accepted.

4.) **Final Examination**: 15% of grade

In-class examination of reading allows for a unique synthesis of materials and is required in some shape or form by the Provost's office. It is also a component of the Ph.D. program before you begin dissertation research and writing. The final exam in this class will be a composite of essay questions written by me and you, and although it will be shorter it will take the form of the current Ph.D. Candidacy Examination so that you can practice preparing for and writing an in-class examination over a significant body of reading material.

Make-up exams are given only when I have been contacted *prior* to the exam and *only* when a verifiable extenuating circumstances exist, e.g., medical emergency or hospitalization.

Standards for Written Work

Generally, standards for written work are as follows, and may be modified some by actual assignment requirements:

An "A" text is exceptional or highly original work, presents sophisticated and significant critique or argument, meets or exceeds assignment requirements, and is free of grammatical or other errors.

"B" work is good or strong, contains all required elements of the assignment, but may fall short of excellence in one or more category, including mechanical errors.

A "C" text is competent, meets all, if not most, required elements of the assignment, but is average in some ways and may have several types of grammatical and other errors.

"D" writing is weak, falls below average in one or more major criteria, and may have substantial errors.

An "F" text is reserved for material that fails in all or most categories of evaluation.

Golden Rule and Grading Policy:

Please see The Golden Rule regarding classroom behavior and diversity. Typically, this means that while disagreement can and will occur during classroom discussions, we all will behave in a civil manner and respect the right of someone to express an opinion that may be different from our own. Avoid sexist, racist, homophobic, or other types of derogatory remarks. "Live, and let live," in other words.

Plagiarism—and academic honesty and integrity. Often students, even graduate students, plagiarize because they fear trying out their own ideas, they have not left themselves adequate time for an assignment, or they simply don't know how to credit a source. However, plagiarism—the submission of someone else's words or ideas as your own—is a serious offense. You will get an "F" and can fail the course or be disciplined by the university for such action. Like you, I have access to the Internet and ways of verifying use of sources like Wikipedia and what's been cut and pasted—or simply purchased—so the consequences of plagiarizing are not worth the risk. Indeed, papers I suspect are plagiarized will be submitted to http://www.turnitin.com for verification of authorship.

If you have questions about how to document sources, please see me or the Writing Center.

The **grading scale** is as follows:

94-100 =	A	4.00	76-73 =	C	2.00
93-90 =	A-	3.75	72-70 =	C-	1.75
89-87 =	B+	3.25	69-67 =	D+	1.25
86-83 =	B	3.00	66-63 =	D	1.00
82-80 =	B-	2.75	62-60 =	D-	.75
79-77 =	C+	2.25	59 - =	F	.00

Grades will be posted at the WebCT url and updated regularly. No incompletes will be given in this course.

Attendance

You get *one* excused absence in this class—use it wisely, if you have to. Class attendance is expected and is related to participation and academic performance (see above). For university financial aid reporting purposes, I will take attendance in order to verify when individuals have stopped attending class. Taking attendance also helps me learn your name more quickly. The consequences of missing more than *one class* are at my discretion, but usually involve the lowering of your final grade by one or more letter grades. If you miss *five* classes (over one month of classes), you will fail the class regardless of what grade you have and the reasons for missing class. If you are not in class, it is your responsibility to obtain missed assignments or notes from classmates. If absent for medical reasons, please document them and, if needed, seek a "medical withdrawal." Having a "bad semester" for whatever reason is usually a good reason to withdraw from the class.

Students who have perfect attendance will get the "benefit of the doubt" when it comes to a "close grade."

University Writing Center:

The Writing Assistance Center, staffed by the Department of English, exists to help those with concerns or questions they may have about all kinds of writing. Regardless of the course your writing is for, they can assist you with the beginning stages of writing, with effectively developing your thesis or ideas, and with mechanics and matters of revision and proofreading. I encourage all of you to make the Writing Center a key part of your university education. It offers individual help, free of charge, and is located in LS 616 (trailer by SARC & Biological Sciences). You can set up an appointment by dropping in, or by calling 823-2197. http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/

Disability Accommodation

UCF is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Students Disability Services (407) 823-2371.

Schedule

The first week of the course and the last will be used for winding things up and then winding them down. The following schedule is "reading intensive," especially in parts, and *subject to revision*; it aims to give you a general idea of how the course is intended to shape up. (Note: writing assignments related to readings will usually be assigned the class period *before* such reading is to be completed.)

Dates	Class Focus	Assignments for next class
Week 1 (Jan 9) **Add/drop deadline January 12**	Course Introduction	Read *Orality and Literacy*, 5-176
Week 2 (Jan. 16)	Ong's *Orality and Literacy*	Read *Leonardo to the Internet*, 1-127; abstract of Ong chapter due January 23
Week 3 (Jan. 23)	Misa's *Leonardo to the Internet*	Read *Leonardo to the Internet*, 128-276; WebCT assignment due January 30
Week 4 (Jan. 30)	**No class** WebCT assignment	Read *Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia*, 1-110
Week 5 (Feb. 6)	*Professor Ke Francis—-Flying Horse Press field trip, Diebert's *Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia* Discussion Report	Read *Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia*, 113-217; book review due Friday, February 16 (4:00 p.m.)
Week 6 (Feb. 13)	Workshop (book review), Diebert's *Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia* Discussion Report	Read *Writing Space*, xi-98; paper thesis proposal due Friday, February 23 (see WebCT)
Week 7 (Feb. 20)	Bolter's *Writing Space* Discussion Report	Read *Writing Space*, 99-214
Week 8 (Feb. 27) **Withdrawal deadline March 2**	Workshop (research paper), Bolter's *Writing Space* Discussion Report	Read *Memory Bytes*, 1-149;
Week 9 (March 6)	*Library Digital Services field trip with Ms. Lee Dotson, Rabinovitz and Geil's *Memory Bytes* Discussion Report	Read *Memory Bytes*, 150-329
SPRING BREAK (March 12-16)		
Week 10 (March 20)	Workshop (research paper), Rabinovitz and Geil's	Read *Radiant Textuality*, ix-97 (IATH, Unsworth's

	Memory Bytes, Discussion Report	"Beyond Representation" lecture, TEI)
Week 11 (March 27)	McGann's *Radiant Textuality* Discussion Report	Read *Radiant Textuality*, 99-248; McGann questions due Monday, April 2; see NINES, Ivanhoe, etc
Week 12 (April 3)	*McGann's *Radiant Textuality* (evening teleconference call with Professor McGann, University of Virginia) Discussion Report	Read *Free Culture*, xiii-173
Week 13 (April 10)	Workshop (research paper and Final Exam), Lessig's *Free Culture* Discussion Report	Read *Free Culture*, 177-306; course portfolio (100 points) due April 17
Week 14 (April 17)	Course evaluation Course Portfolio due Lessig's *Free Culture* Discussion Reports on Research Paper	
Final Examination: Tuesday, April 24, 7:00-9:50 p.m	Final Exam	