

ENG 6801: History of Texts and Technology

Professor J.D. Applen **Telephone** 823-2213 (emergencies)
Class Period Th 6 to 8:50 **Classroom** Colbourn 203
Office Colbourn 303D **Office Hours** T, 2:00-3:00,
Th, 4:30-5:45

* If you cannot make these hours, please feel free to make an appointment with me. Please believe me when I tell you that I like it when you come to my office with some specific concerns about the class. When you have questions or offer ideas to me in my office, you help me understand how we are all connecting in class.

E-mail jd.applen@ucf.edu

COURSE OVERVIEW

The course trajectory will include, among other things, how texts and technologies have changed over four major epochs—the ages of oral speech, literate culture, the “late age of print,” and electronic media—and how they have affected the way we think. We will also take into account the history of the practice of breaking information down, naming it, and organizing it.

Texts

J. David Bolter. *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*. Second Edition. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Sven Birkerts. *Changing the Subject: Art and Attention in the Internet Age*. Graywolf Press.

Kenneth Gergen. *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity*. Basic.

Daniel Headrick. *When Information Came of Age*. Oxford University Press.

Thomas Kuhn. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Third Edition. University of Chicago.

Walter Ong. *Orality and Literacy*. Routledge.

Assignments

Annotated Bibliography/Reader's Journal	15%
Research Paper	45%
Class Presentations	15%
Online Postings	10%
Class Participation and Professionalism	15%

SUMMARY OF POLICIES

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is stealing. Plagiarism is a serious offense in all courses at UCF and, like other forms of cheating, it may endanger a student's whole career. Students who may plagiarize receive severe penalties, including immediate failure for the assignment, probable failure in the course, disciplinary referral to the appropriate dean, and possible expulsion from the university.

Students are guilty of plagiarism if they do the following:

- copy or repeat without acknowledging the source someone else's words, phrases, or ideas;
- summarize or expand someone else's work or ideas without properly acknowledging the person or source;
- copy papers by other students *or* allow other students to copy their papers;
- or allow anyone else to revise or edit their work without their instructor's explicit permission.

Course Assignments and Grades

The format and the length of written assignments will be discussed well in advance of the due date. Please ask any questions about the assignments that you might have. Hopefully, you will do this in class before your classmates who might have the same question.

I base all written assignments on four general criteria: content, organization, expression, and mechanics. I will explain how you have met these criteria in written comments and/or in conference.

In addition to standard grades (A, B, C), please note that I will be giving plus and minus grades such as A- or C+ for this course. The final grades will be based on the following breakdown: 93-100%=A, 90-92.99%=A-, 87-89.99%= B+, 84-86.99%=B, 80-83.99%=B-, 77-79.99%=C+, 74-76.99%=C, 70-73.99%=C-. Between 67 to 69.99% = D+, 64 to 66.99%, 60-63.99%. Between 50 to 59%=F. Below 50%=0.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. There will be something offered in every class meeting that can substantially improve your ability as a writer and a thinker and, therefore, it is important that you come to class. Please note the following absence rules.

- You can miss one class a semester without affecting your grade.
- Every absence after your first two absences reduces your grade by one-half of a grade per class missed. For example, a grade of B will become a B-.
- I will also count three late appearances to any class as one absence. Please be on time. If you come in at 6:01pm, this is late. If you cannot come to class on time because you cannot negotiate UCF parking issues, family responsibilities, the distance one must walk between classes on campus, you should not be in this class.
- If you miss more than 3 sessions of this class, you will receive a grade of F.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the assignment for the next class period from a classmate or me.

Late Papers

Papers turned in late will be marked down one full letter grade per class meeting. For example, a "B" paper that is due on a Tuesday and turned in on Thursday will be marked as a "C." Papers are late if you do not have them at the beginning of class. There is little reason for turning in a paper late since all assignments are given to you, in writing, well in advance of the due date.

COURSE SCHEDULE	
Week 1: 1/12	Introduction to course. Take online quiz this first week by Friday at 11:59 pm.*
Week 2: 1/19	Orality and Literacy. Chapters 1-3. Swen Birkerts. "On or About."
Week 3: 1/26	Orality and Literacy: Chapters 4 and 5. Swen Birkerts, "It's Not Because I'm a Cranky Luddite, I Swear."
Week 4: 2/2	Orality and Literacy- Online . Swen Birkerts. "Notebook: Reading in a Digital Age."
Week 5: 2/9	Writing Space. Chapters 1-4.
Week 6: 2/16	Writing Space. Chapters 4-8. Borges. Annotated Bibliography/Reader's Journal begin
Week 7: 2/23	Writing Space- Online .
Week 8: 3/2	Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chapters 1-9.
Week 9: 3/9	Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chapters 10-13. Turn in annotated bibliography/reader's journal.
Week 10: 3/16	Spring Break.
Week 11: 3/23	Turn in annotated bibliography/reader's journal on Monday via Webcourses. Conferences. Wednesday, March 22nd, is the last day to withdraw.
Week 12: 3/30	The Saturated Self. Chapters 1-5. Swen Birkerts, "Hive Mind."
Week 13: 4/6	The Saturated Self. 6-9. When Information Comes of Age, Chapter 1.
Week 14: 4/13	The Saturated Self or Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Online .
Week 15: 4/20	When Information Comes of Age. Chapter presentations in groups of two.
Week 16: 4/27	Final. 7:00 pm – 9:50 pm, Thursday.

*For the first disbursement of financial aid, we are required to gather verification of engagement no later than Friday, January 13th, 2017 by 11:59 pm EST. Without verification of this engagement, students will not receive their aid.

Imagine two forest rangers, one a white speaker of Standard English and the other an Indian speaker of Navaho, riding together on inspection in Arizona. They notice a broken wire fence. When they return to their station, the English-speaking ranger reports *A fence is broken*. He is satisfied that he has perceived the situation well and has reported it conscientiously. The Navaho, though, would consider such a report vague and perhaps even meaningless. His report of the same experience would be much different in Navaho—simply because his language demands it of him.

First of all, a Navaho speaker must clarify whether the “fence” is animate or inanimate; after all, the “fence” might refer to the slang for a receiver of stolen goods or to a fence lizard. The verb the Navaho speaker selects from several alternatives will indicate that the fence was long, thin, and constructed of many strands, thereby presumably wire (the English-speaking ranger’s report failed to mention whether the fence was wood, wire, or chain link.). The Navaho language then demands that a speaker report with precision upon the act of breaking; the Indian ranger must choose between two different verbs that tell whether the fence was broken by a human act or by some nonhuman agency such as a windstorm. Finally, the verb must indicate the present status of the fence, whether it is stationary or is, perhaps, being whipped by the wind. The Navaho’s report would translate something like this: “A fence (which belongs to a particular category of inanimate objects, constructed of long and thin material composed of many strands) is (moved to a position, after which it is now at rest) broken (by nonhumans, in a certain way).”

The Navaho’s report takes about as long to utter as the English-speaking ranger’s, but it makes numerous distinctions that it never occurred to the white ranger to make, simply because the English language does not oblige him to make them.

■ from Pete Farb’s *Word Play*, 195-6

Oral Presentations Guidelines

There will be two or three oral presentations done each week by members of this class. You have no more seven minutes each, max. You can read something and then talk it through. Think about your audience as you might be reading in an area that they are not. Make your theory concrete by offering a supportive example. You will give two presentations each this semester.

Questions you might ask yourself:

- What does the reading have to do with texts and technology and history?
- What are the texts? What are the technologies?
- What is the theory that informs our understanding of texts and technology?
- How are they situated in a particular period?
- How can you use anything the writer you are commenting on in your own work?
- Can you extend a concept from one age or technology or mindset to a contemporary technology or practice?
- Can you connect something we have learned in a previous course reading to what you are presenting on?
- What is the most difficult theory in the reading? Explain it better than the book.

You don’t have to answer all of these questions; just make a point that allows us to understand some aspect of the week’s assigned reading better. Don’t summarize the entire body of reading for the week you present. You might end with a question for all of us to consider.