

ENGLISH 239: MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION

Course Syllabus

Fall 2013 MW 12:00-1:15 STV 408

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Office hours: M/W by appointment (we may need to meet in a lab)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Multiple media is partly where the name of this class — Multimodal Composition — comes from. The term multimodal, as it is used here in this academic setting, refers to multiple modes of communication including linguistic, visual, spatial, gestural, and aural ways of making meaning. The term comes from The New London Group's (2000) seminal book, *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*, in which the authors describe their vision of what communication strategies should be taught in schools and how. Their argument, as you might have guessed, is about having students learn in multiple ways, not favoring or privileging one mode of communication (such as writing) over another. In this class, for instance, we will not be privileging the written word over aural, visual, or multimodal ways of communicating. In fact, the point of this class is to learn to communicate in multiple modes, and our particular focus this term will be in the varied genres available to scholarly multimedia (a term that will be explained in depth during class and in readings).

Our major project for this class is to compose collaborative scholarly multimedia pieces for potential publication in a peer-reviewed journal. This is a major piece of academic writing, written in multiple modes. To prepare ourselves for this project, we will investigate multimodal composition theory, digital scholarship, and reading and analyzing multimodal, scholarly webtexts. The semester is generally split into two parts: the first half of the semester involves learning about and analyzing multimodal compositions and the technologies used to compose them; the second half of the semester is involves composing group webtexts.

COURSE GOALS

- to develop and interrogate our critical analysis and composing skills in multiple media;
- to experience multimodal composition as a process that includes analysis, invention, drafting, and revision across modes, media, and genres of texts;
- to understand that multimodal composition is both rhetorical and creative, which can be useful in many disciplines and settings; and
- to investigate the impact of digital technologies on reading and producing multimedia texts.

COURSE MATERIALS

- Our textbook, *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* by Kristin L. Arola, Jennifer Sheppard, and Cheryl E. Ball is being published by Bedford/St. Martin's in 2014. We have the privilege of having access to this text beforehand (in the form of .pdfs available on Reggiet.net), but please keep these texts confidential (no public posting, copies, etc.) since the publisher owns the copyright to the text.
- Additional readings that will be available on ReggieNet.

TECHNOLOGY

- This is a technologically intensive course and we have access to numerous programs in our 408 computer lab, including Audacity (open source audio software), iMovie, and the Adobe Creative Suite (which includes Dreamweaver, Photoshop, and InDesign). In addition to our class time, the lab is open for students currently taking classes in the lab (use your ID for access) during open

times (right now, MW 10am-11am and after 5pm; see posted schedule for other days of the week).

- You should bring headphones to class every day. Headsets with microphones are encouraged but not required.
- Free programs that you can install on your home computers include audacity, GIMP (photo editing software), MovieMaker (comes with PCs), and CamStudio (records real-time activity).
- Technology can be checked out from me and from the library. If you check out equipment from me, it must be returned in order to receive a final grade for this course (i.e., if you lose, break, or have stolen the equipment, you must replace it before I will issue you a grade). Technology available for check-out in the library includes laptops, iPads, cameras, video recorders, SD cards, tripods, and microphones.
- If you do desire to purchase programs, which are not required for this course, I highly suggest going through TechZone. For example, Microsoft Office (University 365 edition) is \$79.99.
- In addition to ReggieNet and social media sites such as YouTube, we will be using DropBox to upload your projects. I will send you all a link for how to register for an account.
- Save your work **OFTEN** and in **MULTIPLE PLACES**. It is devastating to have to start over in any project, including intensive multimedia projects. Save files on jump drives, Google docs, your ilstu student online space, email, home computers, school computers, and so forth. Losing files or other technology issues (going home and not having access to the internet, for example) is never an excuse to miss an assignment. **Plan ahead and save often!**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

This class is primarily about learning and practicing multimodal composing, rather than presenting a perfect, finished product, so the assignments in this course represent a progression of learning. In general, meeting all of the requirements for this course will allow you to earn a “C.” You can earn a “B” by turning in above-average work and having above-average participation. You can earn an “A” in this class by turning in excellent work and having excellent participation. Missing assignments, missing classes, and failing to participate will earn a grade of “D” or “F.”

Major **assignments** include:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| • Mode analysis | • Group assemblage report |
| • Rhetorical analysis | • Group design report |
| • Technology review | • Group webtext draft |
| • Webtext review | • Peer review |
| • Individual proposal | • Group webtext final |
| • Group proposal | • Individual reflection |
| • Group source report | |

Feedback primarily comes from informal in-class discussions about your assignments and individual or group conferences. Be sure to take notes during these sessions for future reference. For instance, when I and your peers offer critiques of your draft projects, we assume that you will implement those revision suggestions into your drafts. When you don’t, you should have a very good reason in relation to the purpose of the text for not doing so and be prepared to share those with us. Otherwise, when I am reviewing your final project, I should be able to see your progress on the text from the time it was workshopped as well as from informal, in-class feedback.

Plagiarism is a serious offense, as you surely know by this time in your undergraduate career; in this class, there is less of risk that you will present someone’s work as your own (which is not allowed) than there is a risk that you will inadequately cite someone else’s work (which is also not allowed). Take care

to prepare citations the first moment you realize something is useful. It is often hard to find the webpage, video, article, etc. again, and without proper citations, you will not be able to use the source in your work.

Because of the learning focus of this course, **participation is vital**. Participation includes answering and asking questions, offering interpretations, reporting on the homework, sharing experiences and thoughts, and interacting with your peers, as well as the following:

- **Be present:** You are required to attend every class session. Missed classes will have an effect on your final grade. There are no excused or unexcused absences—if you're not here, you can't participate. The majority of your assignments are presented to the class during class time. Except in the case of extreme emergencies, you will be unable to make up missed presentations. Note that per English Department policy, missing 20% of the course (6 class periods) will result in an automatic failure of the course.
- **Be timely:** Full participation means that you do not show up late, leave early, disappear, or fall asleep during class. These activities will be treated as absences. Timeliness also means having assignments completed by the due date and turning in borrowed equipment on time. If you are not ready to present your work on the day it is due, except for extreme circumstances, you lose the opportunity to present it at all.
- **Be ready:** Readiness means being prepared for class at the beginning of the class period. All homework must be completed before class starts and you must have all materials that you need for the day. For instance, files must be uploaded in the appropriate place before the start of class for them to be considered on-time. We cannot take class time for you to do this kind of administrative work, beyond opening the files to prepare to present them.
- **Be attentive:** You should be fully engaged in the course activities throughout the class period. This includes paying attention to whoever is speaking at the time and paying attention to multimodal demonstrations. This also includes using the computers only for course-related activities, not for checking Facebook, email, news, and so forth. Stay off your phones and minimize side conversations. These activities are considerably rude to instructors and peers and I reserve the right to ask you to leave the room for inattentiveness. Being attentive also includes following directions; for example, turn in work according to the required medium.
- **Be a contributor:** Because a significant part of this course is a group multimodal webtext, it is imperative that you be a contributing group member. Being a contributing group member includes valuing and incorporating each other's suggestions and requests, engaging in respectful debate about possible routes and outcomes, providing constructive criticism to people within and outside of your group, valuing everyone's contributions equally, making yourself available for group meetings, and making the most of class time devoted to working together.
- **Be patient:** Although I think learning to compose with multiple modes is fun, it can be extremely frustrating at times. Give yourself time and space to learn new technologies, make mistakes, try different methods, experiment, work through problems, and ask for help from multiple sources. Use me and your peers as resources. Perform numerous web searches, with different keywords, to find tutorials and problem-solving forums.

If you have questions at any time about anything in this course, whether it is about grades, assignments, participation, or other concerns, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. I am here for you but can only help when I know there is an issue!

SPECIAL NEEDS & ACCOMMODATIONS

I am committed to making this classroom accessible to all needs and learning styles. Students who desire consideration because of any disability or situation should come see me at the beginning of the semester (I cannot make accommodations after the fact). Any student needing to arrange an accommodation for a documented disability should also contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, 309-438-5853 (voice) or 309-438-8620 (TTY) as soon as possible.

SCHEDULE

Week 1

- Aug 19 What is multimodality?
 Aug 21 Chapter 1: What are Multimodal Projects?

Week 2

- Aug 26 Mode Analysis due; present in class.
 Mode analysis: Choose a complicated text, such as a website or a commercial, and report on the modes with which they engage. Be specific and use the details under the mode descriptions to guide your analysis. You will show the text and present your analysis in class. **UPLOAD A LINK TO YOUR TEXT IN THE DISCUSSIONS TAB BEFORE CLASS BEGINS.**
 Sign up for DropBox accounts.
- Aug 28 Chapter 2: Analyzing Multimodal Projects
**Aug 30 is last day to drop a course with no penalty*

Week 3

- Sept 2 No Classes - Labor Day
- Sept 4 Rhetorical Analysis due; present in class.
 Rhetorical analysis: Choose a website, preferably one that is aiming to persuade you about something (not a social networking site), and perform a rhetorical analysis on it; use the directions from p. 39 of the textbook to guide your analysis. Record your analysis as an audio essays (2-3 minutes). It is easiest to use Audacity <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/> - export as .wav files and upload to our class DropBox folder in the Rhetorical Analysis folder. We will listen to them in class. **UPLOAD YOUR AUDIO ESSAY TO DROPBOX AND THE LINK TO YOUR WEBSITE ON THE DISCUSSIONS TAB.** Failure to do so before class begins (12:00pm) will result in you receiving no credit for the assignment.

Week 4

- Sept 9 Chapter 3: Choosing a Genre and Pitching Your Project. Focus on the genre sections of the chapter, not the proposal sections. We will be doing a genre analysis in class.
- Sept 11 Chapter 5: Assembling your Technologies and Your Team. Focus on the technology sections of the chapter. We will discuss the upcoming technology reviews.

Week 5

Sept 16 Lab time for Technology Reviews.

Sept 18 Technology Reviews due; present in class.

Technology Reviews: You will be assigned a particular software to learn about and prepare a tutorial for the rest of the class. Do research, watch/read tutorials, get familiar with the software, practice the software, and then prepare a five-minute presentation teaching the software to the rest of the class. *I highly recommend that you USE the software to present the review.* Use the questions on p. 81 in Chapter 5 to guide your review. The reviews need to be available to everyone after class, so make sure all information is available somewhere (in a video, Prezi, etc.). As always your materials (or links to your materials) must be uploaded PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.

Week 6

Sept 23 Finish technology review presentations. Discuss upcoming webtext review assignment. Begin searching for your webtext to review.

Sept 25 Lab time for Webtext Reviews.

Week 7

Sept 30 Webtext Reviews due; these will be read aloud in class.

Webtext reviews assignment: Write a review letter for a webtext chosen from the *Journal of Undergraduate Multimedia Projects* or *Kairos*. Write a 2-page single-spaced review letter evaluating the effectiveness of the argument, including components of the rhetorical situation, design choices, and how the design choices interact with the scholarly argument. Upload your letter and a link to the webtext on the discussions tab BEFORE CLASS BEGINS.

Oct 2 Reread pp. 51-56 of Chapter 3. Introduce Individual Proposal assignment and compose reading response about potential topics. See the Discussion tab for details.

Week 8

Oct 7 Lab time for Individual Proposals.

Oct 9 Individual proposals due; present to class.

Individual Proposals: For your final project, you will be creating a multimodal group webtext critically analyzing an aspect of technology (see Discussion tab for more details). In order to get to that point, first, each of you will prepare and present your own proposals about a potential webtext. Then, you all will vote on which projects you would like to work on and we will form groups of 3-4. (Note that means that about 1/3 of your proposals will turn into group projects!!!)

On this day, then, you will present your individual proposals to the class. Present them in a form that will be accessible to everyone afterwards (audio essay, written essay, PowerPoint, etc.) for their consideration for voting. Upload this material to the discussions tab prior to the beginning of class.

Include the following in your proposal: Proposed topic, tentative argument, how you envision supporting that argument (i.e. evidence, sources), and how you propose to design the webtext (i.e. technologies used, organizing metaphor). Include links or .pdfs of one or more

outside sources that your peers can go to (such as a news article that got you interested in this topic). The proposal will be evaluated based on 1) following assignment directions and including all required items, 2) demonstrating understanding and application of course concepts, and 3) demonstrating appropriate level of thought, planning, and research in preparing a detailed proposal. (Note that these proposals will evolve as the group researches and composes the webtext.)

**Oct. 11 is last day to drop a course*

Week 9

Oct 14 Midterm feedback. Vote on proposals, form groups, and begin planning group work. Introduce Group Proposal assignment.

Oct 16 Lab time for Group Proposals.

Week 10

Oct 21 Chapter 4: Working with Multimodal Sources. Discuss copyright and fair use.

Oct 23 Group proposals due; present in class, with entire class engaging in feedback process.

Week 11

Oct 28 Source reports due; present in class. Remainder of class is lab time for Group Webtexts.

Oct 30 Revisit Chapter 5: Assembling your Technologies and Your Team in order to discuss technological choices within your projects, including the organizing metaphor, genre conventions, and more.

Week 12

Nov 4 Asset reports due; present in class. Remainder of class is lab time for Group Webtexts.

Nov 6 Chapter 6: Designing Your Project.

Week 13

Nov 11 Design reports due; present in class. Remainder of class is lab time for Group Webtexts.

Nov 13 Chapter 7: Defining and Revising Your Project. Discuss revising.

Week 14

Nov 18 Lab time for Group Webtexts.

Nov 20 Draft of Group Webtext due. Peer review in class.

Week 15

Nov 25 No classes - Thanksgiving Break

Nov 27 No classes - Thanksgiving Break

Week 16

Dec 2 Chapter 8: Putting Your Project to Work. Discuss finishing touches for project. Remainder of class is lab time for group webtexts.

Dec 4 Discuss revision and reflection. Remainder of class is lab time for group webtexts.

Week 17 - Finals Week

Dec 9 Final group webtexts due

Tentative!

Individual reflections due

We will meet to show these webtexts to each other in class and compose your reflections. (It is also acceptable to compose your reflections prior to meeting.) Attendance is mandatory.

Webtext assignment details

There was a famous New Yorker cartoon that said "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog." That idea, that identity is completely invisible on the internet, has been debated ever since. People have long discussed the possibility of the Internet as a leveling field and the "digital divide" that emerges - inequalities in technological adoption, use, access, and literacies between people of different abilities, races, and so forth. Another related issue is the concept of "digital native," which refers to people who have grown up with digital technologies such as the Internet, versus those who have had to learn it later. Because of the contested nature of these subjects and because of the way that they impact people, I am asking you to create a multimodal group webtext (which is a supported argument composed in multiple modes) related to these topics that ask you to take a critical approach to technology by questioning issues of access power, usability, or engagement, especially as they relate to gender, race, sexuality, disability, class, or age.

In order to get to the group webtexts, though, first each of you will prepare and present your own individual proposals about a potential webtext. Then, you all will vote on which projects you would like to work on and we will form groups of 3-4. (Note that means that about 1/3 of your proposals will turn into group projects!!!) Thus, on Oct. 9th, you will all present your individual proposals to the class. Present them in a form that will be accessible to everyone afterwards (audio essay, written essay, PowerPoint, etc.) for their consideration for voting during the next class period. Upload this material to the discussions tab prior to the beginning of class.

INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PROPOSAL: Proposed topic, tentative argument, how you envision supporting that argument (i.e. evidence, sources), and how you propose to design the webtext (i.e. technologies used, organizing metaphor). Include links or .pdfs of one or more outside sources that your peers can go to (such as a news article that got you interested in this topic). The proposal will be evaluated based on 1) following assignment directions and including all required items, 2) demonstrating understanding and application of course concepts, and 3) demonstrating appropriate level of thought, planning, and research in preparing a detailed proposal.

Here are some links to articles describing possible topics:

Digital Divide:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_divide_in_the_United_States

<http://www.pewinternet.org/Topics/Demographics/Digital-Divide.aspx?typeFilter=5>

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/06/130603092448.htm>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tom-alderman/the-fractious-world-of-di_b_2821090.html

Challenges to the term:

<http://www.socialens.com/blog/2011/02/05/the-difference-between-digital-literacy-and-digital-fluency/>

<http://www.technologyreview.com/view/428043/there-is-no-digital-divide/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_literacy

Class divide:

http://news.cnet.com/technology-and-the-new-class-divide/2010-1028_3-5924758.html

http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/08/24/how-technology-wrecks-the-middle-class/?_r=0

Gender gap:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jaleh-bisharat/technologys-persistent-ge_b_3345940.html

http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2012/06/gender_gap_in_technology_and_silicon_valley_.html

<http://www.newrepublic.com/article/112784/tech-industry-gender-gap-closing-it-starts-classroom>

http://colorlines.com/archives/2013/04/how_to_get_a_black_woman_fired_in_six_tired_steps.html
(gender and race)

Racial divides:

<http://mediadecoder.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/07/report-suggests-a-digital-divide-among-latinos/>

<http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2011/05/massive-digital-divide-for-native-americans-is-a-travesty132/>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/maura-cheeks/african-americans-digital-divide_b_996829.html

<http://www.blackenterprise.com/technology/digital-divide/>

Age:

<http://edition.cnn.com/2012/12/04/business/digital-native-prensky/index.html>

<http://www.livescience.com/5877-digital-divide-grandma-online.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-11501622>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mary-quigley/digital-natives-classroom_b_1643372.html

Social media movements:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_media#As_tool_for_social_change

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andrew-lenoir/dissent-and-the-digital-n_b_1101613.html

http://colorlines.com/archives/2013/07/black_mothers_speak_out_for_their_sons_after_trayvon_he_is_not_a_suspect.html

Twitter and social justice:

<http://www.techradar.com/us/news/internet/web/four-crazy-cases-that-show-twitter-as-the-new-arbiter-of-social-justice-1163149>

<http://www.ebony.com/news-views/justice-for-trayvon-black-twitter-kills-juror-b37sbook-304#axzz2gXQFUQjr>

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-07-13/news/ct-talk-trayvon-martin-blackout-0713-20130713_1_george-zimmerman-trayvon-martin-rip-trayvon

Feel free to explore more specific issues, like how a particular technological tool was used to promote or stall a social justice issue (Tumblr, Facebook, Twitter, etc.), how a particular technological tool reveals or reproduces masculine, White, able-bodied, and/or heterosexual norms, and so forth.

***If you find these guidelines to be too limiting and have another idea, discuss it with me IN ADVANCE. I am happy to work with you to make sure you are researching something of interest to you, but you must give us time to do so before the deadline.

Sources, Assets, and Copyright

October 21, 2013

Considerations:

- What sources are going to be convincing?
- What is the medium?
 - Ex. Visual evidence can be more convincing than textual
- What sources are going to establish your credibility?
- What does credibility mean in a multimodal format?
 - Ex. Video quality might be more important than author
- Why is it useful to understand who the publisher/creator is?
- Are your sources diverse (are they privileging one source of knowledge too much)?

Sources

- Sources are texts such as books, articles, Web sites, etc., that you can use to gather information about a topic or genre.
- Assets are the pieces of a source that you are extracting to use in your multimodal webtexts.
- Assets include quotations, images, sound clips, Web templates, video clips, screenshots, photos, drawings, graphs, and more.
- You may be gathering assets from your sources or you may be creating your own!!!
- SAVE assets as soon as you find them if you think they will be helpful!!!

Assets

My suggestions for thinking about sources right now:

- What are you trying to accomplish?
- What can help you accomplish your goals?
- What aspects of multimodality can help you achieve that goal (and what are the sources that can support that)?
- Although you can have a broad reach because you are still researching your topic, try to plan out your webtext well enough that you can engage in a directed search.

Sources and Assets for Your Project

- The directions for this assignment come from the textbook p. 63, 69, and 76.
- For Mon. Oct. 28 (one week from today), your group will present a list of sources to me and the class.
- Please compile these lists in Excel
 - This allows you to make columns for all of the required information.
 - This allows you to build upon the source report for your asset report.

Source Reports

Include the following in the list:

- Author
- Title
- Publication venue
- Mode (text, quotation, image, photo, sound, video, etc.)
- Location (web address or where you have stored it if you created the asset).
- How you plan to use the source (i.e. what does it discuss that is relevant to your project; what point does it help you make)
- Any asset(s) you're planning to use from this source

Source Reports

- Purpose of copyright is to encourage innovation and creativity
- The item must be original, creative, and be capable of being stored
- Works in the "public domain" mean that they are available for free use
 - Web comic about the public domain:
<http://web.law.duke.edu/cspd/comics/zoomcomic.html>
 - Fairy Use Tale:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJn_jC4FNDo
 - Creative Commons: <http://creativecommons.org>

Copyright

The U.S. Copyright Office allows for use of copyrighted material for the following purposes:

- The purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes (criticism, commentary, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, research, transformation, parody)
- The nature of the copyrighted work (Is it factual? Has it been published?)
- The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole
- The effect of the use upon the potential market for, or value of, the copyrighted work (availability, reach, distribution)
- <http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html>

Fair Use

- Try to find non-copyrighted work (Creative Commons)
- When you look at a source/asset, research what they say about permissions and copyright (ex. Pew)
- To use copyrighted work, you get permission from the copyright holder (author or publisher)
- If this is easy and free, do it!
- If it's not easy or free, try to qualify under fair use.
 - **Citation** is first and foremost the best way to protect yourself.
- If it's not easy or free or easy to qualify under fair use, try to find another asset.
- Creating your own asset helps you avoid these issues.
 - Be careful when working with people, though, because you must get permission to conduct research on humans! P. 68

Permissions

- Provide enough information about each source so that readers can find it themselves.
- Use a citation style that is credible within the context of the genre you've chosen to produce. (approximate MLA or APA)
- Use the Purdue Owl for citation help: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>
- Citing a Cereal box: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPyB3bl7GY0&list=UUSxN8OREBQwFC5mUdP6snhg&index=6>
- Questions to think about NOW:
 - Where is the source's home?
 - What is its address?
 - What is its name?
 - Who is its owner?
 - When was it born?

Citations

- This week, you are presenting your Group Proposals on Wednesday. Be as detailed as possible (you can see how useful it is to direct your work).
- Next week, you will show your Source Reports.
- The following week, you will prepare Asset Reports. Asset reports build upon the Source Reports by identifying the assets that you will be taking from the sources, identifying the copyright issues of the asset, and adding citation information.
- I am telling you this now because you can choose to add this information when doing research now in order to save time later!!!

Coming Up
