

# ENGL 303: Multimedia Writing, Spring 2008

WVU Department of English, TR 1300-1415, Colson Hall G18, CRN 11782, Spring 2008

<http://www.clc.wvu.edu:8080/clc/Members/sbaldwin/courses/engl303s08>

Note: this website is the authoritative version of the class syllabus.

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The Center for Literary Computing / [www.clc.wvu.edu](http://www.clc.wvu.edu)

[Class Wiki](#)

## Course Description

"In the digital realm, we rely heavily on words. Words as labels. Words as links. Keywords." - Peter Morville

"For me, it is always the story that comes first, because storytelling is a core human activity, one we take into every medium of expression, from the oral-formulaic to the digital multimedia." - Janet Murray

"Let me introduce the word *hypertext* to mean a body of written or pictorial material interconnected in such a complex way that it could not conveniently be represented on paper. (...) The sense of *hyper* used here connotes extension and generality; cf. *hyperspace*." - Ted Nelson

"To live is to pass from one space to another." - Georges Perec

From the English Department Catalog: "Study of communication and design issues in multimedia composition. Focuses on communication, creative expression, persuasion, interactivity, and rhetorical principles. Practice in composing multimedia documents such as online publications, interactive literary works and tutorials. ENGL 303 is part of the English Department's Technical Writing and Editing sequence." ENGL 303 is neither a web design course nor an intro to html; this is a writing course and does involve considerable writing.

## Course Format

Lectures, discussion, hand-on workshops. You will need access to a camera, preferably digital, and a computer with internet access.

## Requirements and activities.

The following are brief summaries of activities to be scheduled throughout the semester. There will be other in-class activities, including in-class writing. All technical skills will be taught in

class. A number of activities ask you to write reflectively about the project you're working on. Some strategies in doing so: consider what you learned, what questions were answered, what questions remain; define key concepts, terms, and references; connect the project to the readings and to other projects in the course.

- Project 1. Create a narrative based on everyday experience. The narrative can be fictional or based on your life, or some combination. The narrative must combine 1) text on your blog, 2) original images on [Flickr](#) (original means images that you take or create), and 3) a [Google Map](#) with a tour of locations in the narrative, including at least 10 labeled stops (consider including other media in the map, such as images). Do not write an account of going to school or partying or the Mountainlair, or other familiar places. The narrative must be specific and original, though it may be based on your life and may be set in Morgantown. Tell us something unique and interesting. The total word count must be at least 1000 words. There must be a link to your project on your original blog, plus a brief reflective text - at least 100 words - reflecting on this project. Concepts: *SHORT TEXT*, *SCANNABILITY*, *HYPertext STRUCTURE*. MULTIMEDIA AS LINKING AND ADDRESSING, IMAGES AS SEQUENCE AND CLOSURE, MAPS AS SPATIAL NARRATIVE. Keywords: LINKING, ADDRESSING, AGENCY, CONTEST AND PUZZLE, REPLAY (forking paths), "AMPLIFICATION THROUGH SIMPLIFICATION," CLOSURE, PARTICIPATION, PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY, DERIVE. Due on the web by midnight February 7. 20%
- Project 2: Knowledge 2.0. There are two parts to this project, both on Wikipedia. First, individually complete two open [tasks](#) on Wikipedia. Second, *with a group of two or three other students*, write a new article on Wikipedia related to the class readings. Deciding on the topic of your tasks and article: 1) choose two different tasks that interest you; ideally they relate to the class topics and reading; 2) for the articles, the easiest approach is to focus on one from the list below, but you could create some other sort of article. Possible topics: 1) Loss Pequeno Glazier (artist, e.g. "White-Faced Bromeliads"); 2) "Zombie and mummy" (artwork, see page on Olia Lialina); 3) "My body a wunderkammer" (artwork, see page on Shelley Jackson); 4) Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries (artist, note: already a brief article, in need of expansion); 5) "cyberdrama" (concept from Janet Murray); 6) Joseph DeLappe (artist, e.g. Dead in Iraq); 7) Jason Nelson (artist); 8) Christophe Bruno (artist, e.g. GoogleAdWords); 9) Talan Memmott (artist, speaker at April conference); 10) "amplifications through simplification" (concept from Scott McCloud); 11) Jim Rosenberg (artist, speaker at April conference); 12) John Cayley (artist, speaker at April conference). The final article must be at least 500 words. You must post a link to all parts of the project - tasks and article - on the class wiki and a brief reflective text - at least 100 words - reflecting on this project. Keywords: NPOV, NOR, V; OPEN CONTENT; TAGGING; SOCIAL MEDIA. Due on the web by midnight March 4. 20%
- Project 3: Network Personae and Being Online. Create a fictional personae using 1) Blogger, Flickr, Google Maps, and 2) at least two other social software sites. Some possible sites: [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [MySpace](#), [Twitter](#) and [Twittervision](#) and [Twittermap](#) and [Twitterwhere](#), [Picasa](#), [Google Video](#), [del.icio.us](#). Create a detailed and consistent character and biography. Create relationships for your character. Add content (images, video, etc.). Elaborate and grow the personae. Give it depth - think of this as an essay

distributed over many sites. Make maximum use of the applications. Also, explore "Online Caroline." Keywords: SOCIAL NETWORK, OPEN REPUTATION. Basic bio/sketch of persona due by end of class March 11. Due on the web by midnight April 3, with a link posted to the class [wiki](#). 20%

- Project 4: *INSECURE TERRITORIES: Morgandad or Baghtown*. A collaboration with students in CAC's Intermedia Program. A complete description is [here](#). At the end, don't forget to post a reflective response to the [Project 4 wiki](#), reflecting on the final project, including what you learned and how you experienced the group work. Due on the web by midnight May 6. 40%
- Participation and attendance. Participation and attendance are crucial. Attendance will be taken regularly after the first week of classes. You are allowed two unexcused absences. Subsequent unexcused absences will reduce your overall grade. I will determine what constitutes an excuse. All reading, writing, and other work is due on the date indicated on the schedule. Unexcused late work will receive no credit. I will determine what constitutes an excuse. If it is clear that you have not done the reading or other work due for a class, you will receive a zero for attendance. You should attend class even if you have not done the work, however, since a great deal happens during class and your presence contributes to the communal learning environment. There will be frequent in-class work with groups of other students and occasional in-class writing. As another aspect of your attendance and included in your overall grade, you *must* attend at least *one* of the three evening events around the *Codework* workshop (evenings of April 3, 4, and 5). I will take attendance at these evenings; it is your responsibility to find me during the evening and make sure I note you as present.

## Required Text

- *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*. Edited by Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan. Noted in the syllabus as **FP**.

## Recommended Text

- *Designing Interfaces* by Jennifer Tidwell

## Grade Descriptors

Adapted from standard grade descriptors for writing courses. These are intended to give general grading guidelines and may not apply in every case.

**A** Exemplary work that demonstrates originality and initiative. The content is mature, thorough, and well-suited for the audience; the style is clear, accurate, and forceful; the information is well-organized and formatted so that it is accessible and attractive; genre conventions are effectively used; mechanics and grammar are correct.

**B** Good work. The work generally succeed in meeting goals in terms of audience, purpose, and genre without the need for further major revisions. It may need some minor improvements in idea, content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics.

**C** Satisfactory. Work is adequate but requires some substantial revisions of idea, content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics; may require further work in more than one area.

**D** Work is unprofessional, requires extensive revisions of idea, content, presentation, writing style, and/or mechanics. The writer has encountered significant problems meeting goals of audience, purpose, and genre.

**F** Not enough information; inappropriate for the situation; and/or major and pervasive problems in terms of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics that interfere with meaning. May be incomplete, or plagiarism may compromises the work on ethical grounds.

## Academic Integrity

West Virginia University expects that every member of its academic community shares the historic and traditional commitment to honesty, integrity, and the search for truth. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating and dishonest practices; and forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud. Here is WVU's [Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism Policy](#).

## Social Justice Statement

"West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and nondiscrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangement with Disability Services (293-6700)."

## Schedule

Jan 15

Welcome to the course. [The Machine is Us/ing Us](#). Create [blog](#).

Jan 17

Topics: 1) What is the web? [Web Writing Biography](#) 2) What is a webpage and how is it made? 3) What is different about writing for/on the web?

Read: [Internet Timeline](#), [Be Succinct! \(Writing for the web\)](#), [How users read the web](#).

Look at: [jodi](#).

Jan 22

Topics: 1) Review web writing bios. 2) A vocabulary for cyberdrama. (Murray: "enactment of the story in the particular fictional space of the computer.") 3) Looks at

digital art. 4) Write on blog towards project 1. Read: Murray, "From Game-Story to Cyberdrama" **FP**. Look at: [My Body a Wunderkammer](#), [White-faced Bromeliads](#), [Grafik Dynamo](#).

Jan 24

Topics: 1) Visual language. 2) Net art examples. 3) Intro to [Flickr](#). [Sandy's tagged things](#). Make a second blog. Bring 3 images to class...  
Read: McCloud, [The Vocabulary of Comics](#) and [Time Frames](#). Look at: [Carl Comics \(McCloud, Play Flickr, Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries\)](#) (especially "Dakota," "Lotus Blossom," "The Sea"), [Zombie and Mummy](#), Jason Nelson, [Net Art/Digital Poetics](#).

Jan 29

Topic: 1) Flickr and visual examples from last class. 2) Gaming and playing text. Game time (play time + event time). Game as mapping. 3) Gaming examples. 4) Writing towards your story: where does it begin? where does it end? what happens in between - contest or puzzle? what is the drama? what is the time involved? how is it segmented (what episodes)? what roles/characters are there? Read: Juul, "Introduction to Game Time" **FP**. Look at: [Dead in Iraq](#), [Antiwargame](#), [Catch the Landmine](#). Recommended: Pearce, "Towards a Theory of Game" **FP**

Jan 31

Topics: 1) Linking in bogger. [Space guy example!](#) 2) Intro to [Google Maps](#). 3) Sitemapping. *Dérive* (drift, wander): "In a *dérive* one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there...." *Psychogeography*: "Psychogeography includes just about anything that takes pedestrians off their predictable paths and jolts them into a new awareness of the urban landscape..." Read: [Derive](#), [Debord on derive](#), [Psychogeography](#), [Debord on Psychogeography](#). Look at: [Sample Google Maps Walking Tour](#), [Tour of Google Maps](#). [Notes](#)

Feb 5

Workshop. 1) Return to site maps. [Examples](#). [WVU A-Z](#) 2) Work on project. Every piece should be labeled and linked. 3) 145pm: Paste starting point in blog. 4) Read and comment. What do you like? What is missing? (Also, comments from Sandy via email.)

Feb 7

Class cancelled. Read: [Aggregators](#), [Web Feeds](#), [Comment Press](#), [Text Arc](#), [Googlism](#), [Google AdWords](#). **Project 1 due by midnight.**

Feb 12

Topic: 1) Project #2. 2) Wiki Posting. [Login!](#) 3) The link. [Ted Nelson Talk](#) Read: [Xanadu](#), [We Are the Web](#), [Rheingold on xanadu](#), [Xanalogical Structure](#).

Feb 14

[Login and try editing!](#) Topic: Social Media / Web 2.0. Read: [Definition of Sociable Media](#), [What is web 2.0](#), [Web 2.0 backpack](#), [Tag \(metadata\)](#), [Tagging](#), [UFOs](#), [Introvertster](#), [google Docs](#).

**Tags.** [Tag Cloud Image](#), [del.icio.us tags](#), [Flickr tag cloud](#), [Amazon Tag Cloud](#), [U Penn Library tags](#). Tags: reflects decision and desire, inclusive, current, weighted, non-binary categorization, discovery over distinction, democratic and communal, low cost, web usability; uncontrolled, imprecise, no levels, "gameable." Recommended: [The Long Tail](#)

Feb 19

Topic: Wikipedia. Read: [Wikipedia](#), [About Wikipedia](#), [Contributing to Wikipedia](#). Read and comment on wiki about [open content](#).

Read and summarize to class. Shamberg, Meadows, Black, Folk: [What Wikipedia is Not](#). Adams, Dyke, Penich, Krebs: [No Original Research](#). Skeens, Graham, Murray: [Neutral Point of View](#). Rafa, Long, Bentoli, Epstein: [Verifiability](#). Zivkovic, Connor, Haun, Palangio: [Vandalism](#)

Feb 21

Topics: 1) Wikipedia tasks: [post on second task](#). 2) Style and format of a wikipedia article. What is the structure of an article? Discuss with group. 3) Lead section. Start lead section.

Read: [Your first article](#), [Starting a new page](#), [Writing better articles](#), [The perfect article](#), [Article development](#).

Also: [Lead section](#), [Policies and Guidelines](#), [GNU Free Documentation License](#)

Feb 26

1) Wikipedia Scanner, Britannica Scandal, and Disclaimers. 2) Talk and User Talk in wikipedia. Read [Talk Page](#) 3) Make an article. [Your first article](#). Important: references and categorization. Format: `[[Category:Name]]` See [articles lacking sources](#).

Read: [Resolving Disputes](#), [General Disclaimer](#), [Non-Wikipedia Disclaimers](#), [Criticism of Wikipedia](#), [Wikipedia Scanner](#), [Wikipedia Woes](#), [Wikipedia vs. Britannica](#), [Wikipedia vs. Britannica 2](#)

Feb 28

Workshop. 1) Post a draft of your Wikipedia article. 2) Post a link on the [wiki](#). 3) Read and respond in "talk" to at least three other draft articles. Focus on the big three (NPOV, NOR, V) and style/structure.

Mar 4

Topics: 1) Reflect on second project in [wiki](#). 2) Review project 3. 3) "Online Caroline." 4) Play Zork. Read: [Zork](#), [Adventure](#), Montfort, "Interactive Fiction" **FP**. [Online Caroline](#).

**Project 2 due by midnight.**

Mar 6

Topics: 1) Check on Online Caroline. 2) Social networking. Basic features? Look at [Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon](#) and [Six Degrees](#) and [Degrees of Separation](#). 3) Give examples of displaying social networks in real / everyday life. 4) Describe and draw a social network in your life, other than your family. What are the relationships? Name them. Consider closeness, betweenness, centrality. Look at [Social Network Image](#) 5) What are the interests constituting these networks? on the web? (in partners) 6) How is reputation and veracity and identity established in social network in real life? On the net? 7) Look at Open / Fake Personality. [Luther Blisset](#) and [Borat](#), and start on your 3rd project.

Read: [Skin](#), [List of Social Networking Sites](#).

Mar 11

[Midterm Feedback](#)

Topics: 1) Online Caroline? 2) In groups, return to question of differences between social networks online and in "real life." 3) Review readings. Discuss. "I wish there were regulations with these forums. There's got to be something." From the MySpace Story. Question: Should there be strict rules of conduct for the internet? What should they be?

4) Work on project 3.

Read: [You Must be Logged into to Do that](#), [Facebook Terms of Use](#), [Facebook in the Flesh](#), [Myspace Story](#), [Social Network Investigations](#).

Mar 13

Topics: 1) Discuss Dibbell (questions below); 2) Discuss Project 4 (links, groups below) [Obsessed with Myspace \(watch with earphones\)](#). Recommended: [Raj, Bohemian](#) (social networking your friends).

Read: Dibbell, [Rape in Cyberspace](#), Schleiner, [Does Lara Croft wear fake polygons?](#), [Luther Blissett \(wikipedia\)](#).

- What takes place in Dibbell's "Rape in Cyberspace"?

- Is what he describes rape, do you think? In what way are the events Dibbell describes rape?

- What do you make of his argument here: "Sometimes, for instance, it grew difficult for me to understand why RL society classifies RL rape alongside crimes against person or property. Since rape can occur without any physical pain or damage, I found myself reasoning, then it must be classed as a crime against the mind -- more intimately and deeply hurtful, to be sure, than cross burnings, wolf whistles, and virtual rape, but undeniably located on the same conceptual continuum. I did not, however, conclude as a result that rapists were protected in any fashion by the First Amendment. Quite the opposite, in fact: the more seriously I took the notion of virtual rape, the less seriously I was able to take the tidy division of the world into the symbolic and the real that underlies the very notion of freedom of speech."

- Are there analogies in the environments you are working with for your 3rd project? That is, what ways do you see social boundaries being crossed and challenged

- Look at [Project 4 description!](#)
- Project 4 groups: 1) Adams, Graham, Palangio, Long, Shamberg; [BLOG](#) 2) Benotlila, Dyke, Meadows, Penich, Skeens; [BLOG](#) 3) Black, Epstein, Haun, Rafa, Zivkovic; [BLOG](#) 4) Connor, Folk, Krebs, Murray; [BLOG](#).

Mar 18

1) Photoshop review? 2) Discuss "Online Caroline." Walker describes being "played by "Online Caroline." She writes: "I see myself as a captive of the narrative of the screen and of the computer." Do you agree with her? What are some of the ways she is captivated? 3) Think of a response / revision to "Online Caroline." Should the story be done differently, given what Walker describes? How? 4) Is this sort of captivation or the web playing us common on the computer/net? Can you think of other experiences of your own or that you've heard of that are similar? Look at [Phorm](#) for example. Or try [Eliza](#) 5) Return to Project 3, your fictional persona. How can you captivate or play people? How can you draw them in? Be specific - remember you are taking advantage of the social software applications. Post to your blog (there should now be a number of postings on your blog about the persona). 6) Read and comment on at least two other blog postings. Read: Walker, "How I was Played by Online Caroline" **FP. Read project 4 links (below).**

Recommended: Utterback, "Unusual Positions" **FP.**

Mar 20

Workshop project 3. Write and post "autobiography" of persona and links to all sites as latest posting on your personal blog. Write autobiography in first person: "I am..." 100 words *minimum*. Then, read and comment on postings of all your Group 4 members. In your comment, indicate how they can add greater detail or "captivating" detail. Note how they are using/taking advantage of the medium (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and give pointers on how they might take greater advantage of it. Also, what do you like/dislike?

### Plan final project...

- **Detournement: creative and socially aware re-use of cultural materials, leading to awareness of the circulation of media messages.** Examples: [Extreme Drought](#), [Nike Ground](#), [Billboard Liberation](#)
- **Derive: literally "drifting" through urban space, this is a radically re-envisioning of our lived environments (towns, neighborhoods, etc.) to understand our desires and inclinations in relation to place, and to transform our world as a result.** Examples: [Capture the Flag](#), [Delocator](#), [Parkour](#)
- Remember: no class Tuesday after break! Meet with CAC group - post more to blog.
- Important links (to read prior to April 1): [Bush War Timeline](#), [Baghdad: Mapping the Violence](#), [Iraqi Body Count](#), [Baghdad Zones](#), [Excess Iraqi Deaths](#), compare [ICasualties](#), and the following brief articles: [Detournement](#), [Derive](#), [Psychogeography](#)

Mar 25

Spring Break

Mar 27

Spring Break

Apr 1

Group work.

Apr 3

Presentations, class work. Check out [Wiki Woman](#) on Hilary's wikipedia entry. [Project 3 Due](#)

### Attend at least one "Codework" Workshop public presentation!

Apr 8

Group work.

Apr 10

Presentations, class work. [Facebook riot](#), [Youtube of riot](#)  
- Review Maps. Choose sectors. Begin to research sector and decide on event(s).

Apr 15

Group work.

Apr 17

Presentations, class work. [SFZero](#) Collaborative Production Game, [State of Sabotage](#).  
Project 3 grades back by the end of the day!  
\* What is your sector?  
\* What are the events that occur there?

- \* What event(s) are you focusing on and staging/re-creating?
- \* How are you doing it - what media, what participation, what documentation?

Apr 22

Group work.

Apr 24

Presentations, class work. Present some part of project documentation to class. Leave class with clear plan of final web presentation (architecture, content).

Apr 29

Discussion. Workshop.

- Usability testing. Remember, your goal is an online archive/presentation of the project. Plan a [usability test](#) for the last class to make sure you are achieving this.

May 1

Last Class.

- Groups 1 and 2 as usability test subjects for groups 3 and 4. Then switch. Remember: explain to the test subjects, observe the test subjects, talk aloud.
- Fill out evaluations. [eSEI login](#), [eSEI Tutorial](#)
- If you need to upload to the web, see my after class or arrange to meet me Friday or next week before the deadline.

May 6

\*\* Project 4 due by midnight. Don't forget final posting to [Project 4 wiki](#) \*\*

### **ENGL 303 Blogs**

- [Jessica Adams](#)
- [Ali Bentolila](#)
- [Megan Black](#)
- [Casey Connor](#)
- [Gina Dyke](#)
- [Lauren Epstein](#)
- [Cara Folk](#)
- [Laura Graham](#)
- [Samantha Haun](#)
- [Jen Krebs](#)
- [Erin Long](#)
- [Kristen Meadows](#)
- [Ann Murray](#)
- [Mark Palangio](#)
- [Rachel Penich](#)
- [Marie Rafa](#)
- [Stephen Shamburg](#)
- [Amy Skeens](#)
- [Isaac Zivkovic](#)

