

ENGL 303: Multimedia Writing

West Virginia University, Professional Writing & Editing

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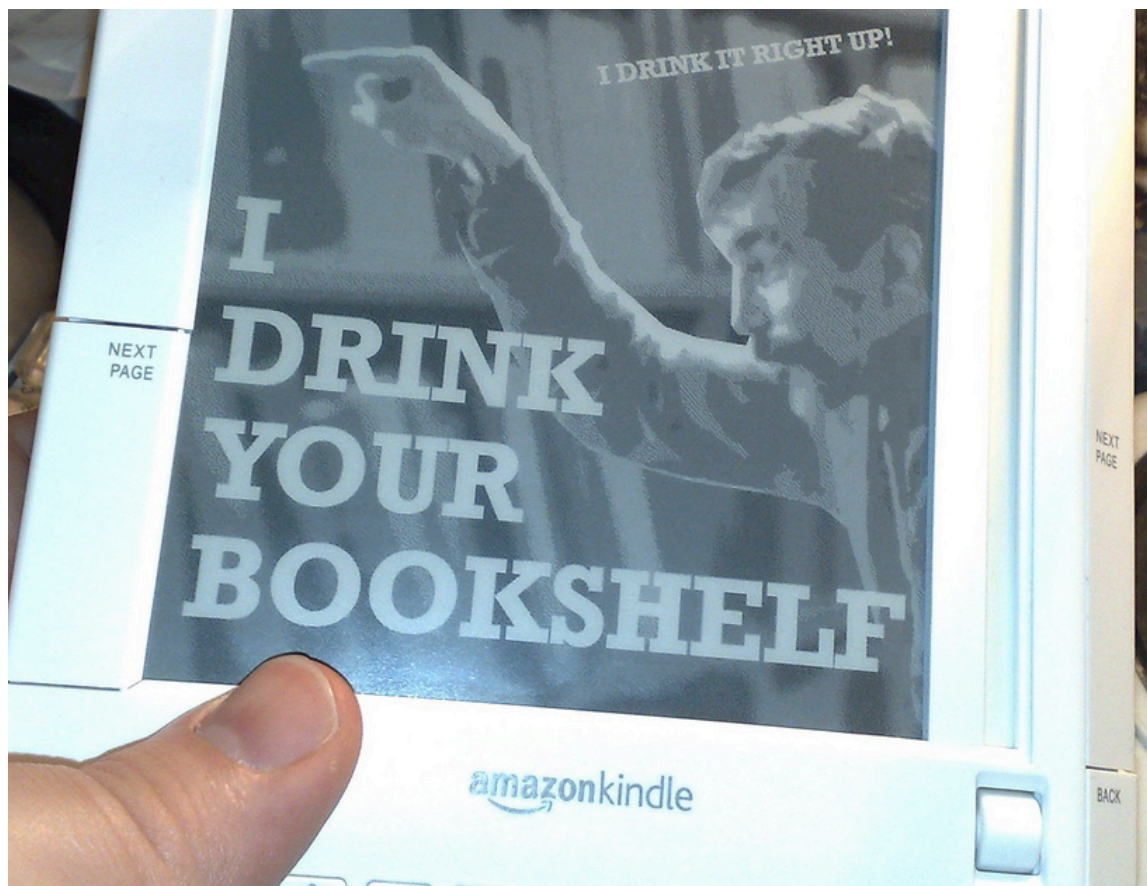
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General Information

Course number: ENGL 303

Course name: Multimedia Writing

Term and year: Spring 2012

Section(s): 001/002

Location: Colson Hall (CLN-D), Go6

Times: 001: TTh 1–2:15 / 002: TTh 4–5:15

Instructor: John Jones, Assistant Professor

Email: john dot jones at-sign mail dot wvu dot edu

Twitter: johnmjones

Office: Colson 231

Office hours: office hours: T 2:30-3:30, W 11-12:30, or by appointment

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Course description

Screens have colonized our imaginations. Everywhere we go we are confronted by them—computer screens, mobile screens, television screens. Increasingly, these screens have become the places where we write, read, and generally experience multiple forms of media. [Kevin Kelly describes](#) this transformation in this way: “I have been a person of the book, but I am becoming a person of the screen. It is not an easy transition.”

In **ENGL 303: Multimedia Writing**, we will use the dual lenses of rhetoric and digital media studies to explore the effects of this transition on writing, in the process both creating and analyzing screen texts such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, video, and comics. Students will not only learn how to compose screen texts in multiple media, they will also interrogate our society’s transition from people of the book to people of the screen. As with Kelly, students may discover that this transition has not been an easy one. While this will be a class on writing and not technology, over the course of the semester students will be expected to use a number of different technologies. Students should be open to learning new technologies and expect to spend a significant amount of time experimenting with and eventually mastering the technological tools necessary for multimedia writing.

Course objectives

By the end of the semester, students will:

- understand and be able to relate the historical development of communication from orality and pre-print to electronic writing;
- understand and be able to relate the cultural and social issues implicated in the movement from print to electronic communication;
- master multimodal, electronic writing, including online digital texts and audio-visual composition;
- master the technologies and best practices for collaborative writing and other group work; and
- master research and source citation methods appropriate for multiple media.

Required resources

In this course, we will examine the effect of technologies—including hardware and software—on writing and reading. **All students will be required to have regular access to some form of hardware or software eReader.** For hardware readers, I recommend something from the following categories:

- *Basic eReader:* Kindle Touch or Nook Simple Touch
- *Basic tablet:* Nook Tablet or Kindle Fire
- *Full-size tablet:* Android or iOS tablet (such as the Samsung Galaxy Tab or iPad)
- *Smartphone*
- *Laptop or desktop computer*

If you already possess a device in one of the categories listed above (or something similar), you are free to use it for this class. If you are not sure which device would best suit your needs, or if you have any questions about this requirement, please [consult me](#) before making your purchase.

Readings

All course readings will either be found online via the [course schedule](#) or on [eCampus](#).

Additional course requirements

- Regular access to a computer and the Internet,
- a [Twitter](#) account
- a [Google Docs](#) account, and
- a [MIX email account](#) which is checked daily. All official communication from the instructor will be sent to your MIX email account.

Recommended resources

- An automated backup service for your data like [SpiderOak](#) or [Dropbox](#);
- a [RSS](#) reader like [Netvibes](#) (web), [Flipboard](#) or [Reeder](#) (mobile), or [Google Reader](#) (cloud);
- services for tracking your research, like [Evernote](#) for note-taking, [Delicious](#) for tracking web content, and [Zotero](#) or [RefWorks](#) for managing documentation and formatting citations; and
- a service for uploading and sharing media, like [Vimeo](#) or [YouTube](#) for videos and [Flickr](#) or [Picassa](#) for photos.

Work visibility

Due to the nature of the course, you will be sharing your work with your fellow classmates as

part of workshops and peer review sessions. Additionally, you will share your work publicly on the web (e.g., on the class blog). If you have any questions about these requirements, *please contact me immediately*. By taking this course, you are indicating that you accept these requirements.

Technology policies

In this course, we will be experimenting with many different technologies for writing and reading. As experimenters, our method will be trial and error. In this course you may be introduced to a new way of communicating that you find indispensable. Alternatively, you may find yourself using a communication technology that does not work for you or that interferes with your methods of learning; there may be technologies that you find difficult or that simply irritate you. That is ok. You do not need to feel that you are required to love the technologies we experiment with or embrace them without question. What is required of you is that you approach all of our assignments with an open mind and your best effort.

While I will try to devote some class time to covering the basic uses of all required technologies, this will not always be possible. On some occasions you will find that you need to use a technology that is new to you but which we have not discussed in class. I do expect that when we discuss specific technologies in class you will take notes so you will have a guide to follow when it comes time for you to use these technologies. In all cases, when faced with new tools and technologies you should expect to devote some time to experimenting with and learning these technologies, researching (or discovering) their possibilities and limitations, and, when possible, sharing what you have learned with your classmates when they need help. If you need help with a particular technology, feel free to come and ask me; however, you will find that in most instances, if you do not know how to accomplish a particular task—for example, adding an image to a blog post—other people have had the same question and the answer is available on [the Internet](#).

You are welcome to use the computers in the lab during class for note-taking and activities that are relevant to the tasks at hand; you are also welcome to bring your own devices for these purposes. In general, most technology is welcome in class as long as it is used to aid student learning. Technology that doesn't serve this purpose—or that actively distracts you or your classmates from learning—is not welcome.

Attendance

In this class we will cover a large amount of information in our face-to-face meetings that will be essential to how you understand the course topics and eventually complete your assignments. We will also be learning a number of skills that you will be expected to develop incrementally over the course of the semester. For these reasons, it is important that you attend class, arrive on time, bring any assigned work and necessary materials, and participate in all in-class writing, editing, revising, and discussion sessions. **There are no “excused” absences in the course.** For this reason, you should reserve your absences for truly unavoidable emergencies. **Each student will be allowed four (4) absences without it affecting his or her grade. For each absence over four (4), the student's grade will be lowered by one letter grade. This includes absences for illnesses and other emergencies.**

Because we have a limited number of class meetings, it is important that you be in class on time and stay for the entire period. **If you arrive to class more than 5 minutes late or**

leave class more than 5 minutes before it is dismissed, you will be counted absent. Further, if you come to class unprepared on the day of a peer-review or conference session—that is, without a draft to workshop with your classmates—you will be counted absent.

If you find that an unavoidable conflict prevents you from attending class or being on time, you should discuss this conflict with me prior to the absence (if possible). Otherwise, you should contact me about any absences as soon as possible.

Late work

If you cannot attend class on the date an assignment is due, you should discuss a make-up date with me before the absence. If you do not contact me before the time an assignment is due, the assignment will be considered late. In general, a problem with technology will not be considered an acceptable excuse for late or incomplete work. If your computer malfunctions, it is your responsibility to find an [alternative one](#) to work on. If your Internet goes out, you will need to find a [different access point](#). And you should create [multiple redundant backups](#) of your work in case you accidentally erase, overwrite, or otherwise lose your files.

Work turned in after it is due will be penalized by ten percentage points for each calendar day it is late, and this penalty will be applied to all subsequent revisions of the work. Blog posts, homework, quizzes, and all other in-class assignments will not be accepted late. If you fail to attend class on the day you are scheduled to lead a class discussion or give a presentation, you should expect to receive no credit for that assignment.

Submitting course work

Unless otherwise noted, all course assignments will be submitted electronically. We will discuss the method and procedures for submitting assignments in class before those assignments are due. All assignments are due before the start of class on the day they are listed in the [course schedule](#).

Evaluation

Course grades will be based on the following factors:

Participation (15%)

This course is designed to be a participatory learning experience. As such, it is important that you fully participate in all in-class activities, specifically by committing yourself to the learning community represented by your classmates and myself.

What is class participation? First, *you cannot participate if you do not attend class*, or if you regularly show up late and otherwise interfere with course activities. For these reasons, course attendance is a necessary prerequisite for participation. However, *attending class does not equal participation*, for it is possible to be in every class meeting without contributing anything to the learning that occurs in class. *It will also be impossible for you to participate in course learning if you come to class unprepared.* For this reason, you should complete all assigned readings and out-of-class assignments, take notes on these activities, and generally engage in effective practices for retaining and relating the material you have covered. *You should bring all materials to each session*, including course texts, additional readings, your

notes, assignment drafts and research sources, discussion notes from previous meetings, and a writing implement. And, *while in class, you should be engaged in the proceedings* by taking notes on our discussions and participating in those discussions either orally or via the Twitter backchannel.

You will have multiple opportunities to earn participation credit. In general, if at the end of the semester you can demonstrate that you were able to substantially enhance or contribute to the course learning community and you fully participated in community activities, you will be able to earn the full participation credit. **While preparation times may vary depending on our weekly schedule, you should generally plan to spend 6 hours a week—or, 2 hours for every hour of class time—preparing for class meetings.**

Twitter assignment (5%)

You will create and regularly update a Twitter account.

Blogging assignment (20%)

You will regularly contribute to the course blog. Your posts should be substantive, exploring new ideas, continuing conversations begun in class or in our readings, and represent your active engagement with the content and themes of the course. **In addition to the time you spend reading course materials and otherwise preparing for your blog posts, you should plan on spending 1–2 hours a week writing and revising these posts.**

Blog response (10%)

You will be assigned one week when you will summarize your classmates' blog posts and lead a 20-25 minute class discussion of the content of those posts. **Students should plan to spend 2–3 hours preparing for this assignment.**

Multi-modal project (25%)

Your first major assignment for the course will be a document that integrates multiple modes of communication—such as text and images—in a single, unified whole. **You should expect to spend 10–20 hours researching, composing, and revising this project.**

Multimedia project (25%)

Your second major assignment will be the creation of a multimedia project that exemplifies the best practices for multimedia writing that we have covered in the course. **You should expect to spend 15–25 hours researching, composing, and revising this project.**

Grade descriptions

Course grades will be determined by the percentages above. The descriptions below will give you an indication of the the expectations that will guide the evaluation of your projects:

- **A (90–100) Outstanding:** represents superlative participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with very high quality in all course work.
- **B (80–89) Excellent:** represents above-average participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with consistently high quality in course work.
- **C (70–79) Average:** represents good participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with generally good quality overall in course work.
- **D (60–69) Below average:** represents uneven participation in course activities; some

gaps in assigned work completed, with inconsistent quality in course work.

- **F (0–59) Inadequate:** represents minimal participation in course activities; serious gaps in assigned work completed, or very low quality in course work.

Research, plagiarism, and scholastic honesty

Taking someone else's published or unpublished ideas and submitting them as your own constitutes plagiarism and will result in formal academic discipline. In general, if you turn in work that is not your own, in whole or in part, without adequate attribution to the original author, or if you commit any other form of scholastic dishonesty, these actions will result in either a major course penalty or, depending on the severity of the violation, failure for the course. If you have any questions about the use you are making of sources for an assignment, you should consult me *before* the assignment is turned in.

For a complete discussion of what constitutes plagiarism and the relevant WVU disciplinary procedures, students should consult the West Virginia University Undergraduate Catalog ([pdf](#)) and the [West Virginia University Student Conduct Code](#).

Accommodations policy

If you have a documented learning disability, hearing or vision problem, or any other special need that might affect your performance or participation in the class, please contact WVU's [Office of Disability Services](#) to arrange accommodations.

Social justice policy

The English Department and the Professional Writing and Editing Program support WVU's commitment to social justice. In this course, you will work with your classmates to create a positive learning environment based on open communication and mutual respect.

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Unless otherwise noted, readings can be found in the “Course Readings” folder on our class site at [eCampus](#)

Week 1: Jan. 10, 12: Course Introduction

- What is multimedia? What is writing?
- Readings
 - Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, Introduction

Week 2: Jan. 17, 19: How writing changes the way we think

- Twitter assignment due
- Readings
 - Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, chs. 3–4
 - Johnson, “[How Twitter Will Change the Way We Live](#)”
 - Orenstein, “[I Tweet Therefore I Am](#)”

Week 3: Jan. 24, 26: Style

- Readings
 - Lanham, *The Economics of Attention*, ch. 1 (on eCampus as a pdf) & ch.3: “What’s Next for Text?” (online [here](#); click on the Table of Contents link then read through all of the resulting pages; also, be sure you have Quicktime installed in your browser so you can access all of the video content)
 - Tufte, *Visual Explanations*, ch. 7, “Visual Confections”

Week 4: Jan. 31, Feb. 2: Writing place

- Choose [collection](#) topic
- Readings
 - Morville, *Ambient Findability*, chs. 2 & 4
 - Parry, “[Ubiquitous Mobile, Persistent Surveillance](#)”

Week 5: Feb. 7, 9: Who gets to write?

- Readings
 - Abelson, Ledeen, and Lewis, *Blown to Bits*, chs. 7–8

Week 6: Feb. 14, 16: Narrative and fiction

- Peer review for first submission of [multi-modal text](#)
- First submission of [multi-modal text](#) due before the start of class on Thursday
- Readings
 - Borges, “Garden of Forking Paths” ([pdf](#)) and “[The Library of Babel](#)”

Week 7: Feb. 21, 23: Remix

- Readings
 - Lessig, *Remix*, chs 1, 4
 - Landow, *Hypertext 3.0*, ch. 1

Week 8: Feb. 28, Mar. 1

- Peer review for second submission of [multi-modal text](#)
- What counts as good design for ebooks?
- Multimedia Workshop: how to create audio and video?
- Second submission of [multi-modal text](#) due before the start of class on Thursday

Week 9: Mar. 6, 8

- What is an author?
- How have our reading habits changed?
- Readings
 - Finkelstein and McCleery, *Introduction to Book History*, chs. 4 & 6

Week 10: Mar. 13, 15

- Pitch meeting for [multimedia projects](#)
- Readings
 - Bolter and Gursin, *Remediation*, ch. 1
 - Burroughs, “[The Cut Up Method of Brion Gysin](#)”

Week 11: Mar. 20, 22

- Choose publication venue for [collection](#)
- Readings
 - Carmody, “[10 Reading Revolutions Before E-Books](#)”
 - Eisenberg, “[Making Science Leap From the Page](#)”

Mar. 27, 29: Spring recess: no class

Week 12: Apr. 3, 5

- Peer review for first submission of [multimedia project](#)
- First submission of for [multimedia project](#) due before start of class on Thursday

Week 13: Apr. 10, 12

- Assemble text of collection
- Group work

Week 14: Apr. 17, 19

- Peer review for second submission of [multimedia project](#)
- Second submission of for [multimedia project](#) due before start of class on Thursday

Week 15: Apr. 24, 26

- Finalize and promote text of collection
- Course recap



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Here are some additional readings to supplement the readings assigned in the schedule.

Week 2: How writing changes the way we think

- Bateson, Gregory. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. 1972. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000. Print.
- Bush, Vannevar. "As We May Think." *The Atlantic Monthly* 176.1 (1945): 101–08. Print.
- Carr, Nicholas. "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" *The Atlantic* 2008. Print.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. "The Naked Face: Can You Read People's Thoughts Just by Looking at Them?" *The New Yorker* 5 Aug 2002: 38–49. Print.
- Havelock, Eric Alfred. *Preface to Plato*. A History of the Greek Mind. Vol. 1. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1963. Print.
- Plato. *Phaedrus: Or on the Beautiful; Ethical*. Print.
- Schmandt-Besserat, Denise. *How Writing Came About* 1992. Austin: U of Texas P, 1996. Print.
- —. "Evolution of Writing." *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Eds. Smelser, N. J. and P. B. Baltes. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2001. 16619–25. Print.
- Turkle, Sherry. *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. New York: Basic Books, 2011. Print.

Week 3: Style

- Demetrius. "On Style." *Aristotle XXIII*. Ed. Henderson, Jeffrey. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1995. 343-526 of Loeb Classical Lib. 199. Eds. Innes, Doreen C. and W. Rhys Roberts. Print.
- Hoffman, Gary, and Glynis Hoffman. *Adios, Strunk and White: A Handbook for the New Academic Essay*. 4th ed. Huntington Beach, CA: Verve, 2007. Print.
- Isocrates. *Isocrates II*. 1928. Trans. Norlin, George. Loeb Classical Lib. 229. Ed. Henderson, Jeffrey. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1956. Print.
- Longinus, Cassius. "On the Sublime." *Aristotle XXIII*. Ed. Henderson, Jeffrey. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP. 159–308 of Loeb Classical Lib. 199. Eds. Fyfe, W. H. and Donald Russell. Print.
- Tufte, Edward R. *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint: Pitching out Corrupts Within*. 2nd ed. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 2003. Print.
- Tufte, Edward. [Edward Tufte Forum](http://www.edwardtufte.com/bboard/). Web. <http://www.edwardtufte.com/bboard/>

Week 4: Writing place

- Bentham, Jeremy. *Panopticon*. *The Panopticon Writings*. Ed. Bozovic, Miran. London: Verso, 1995. 29-95. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. 1977. Trans. Sheridan, Alan. 2nd Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1995. Print.
- Greenfield, Adam. *Everyware: The Dawning Age of Ubiquitous Computing*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders, 2006. Print.
- Karaganis, Joe, ed. *Structures of Participation in Digital Culture*. New York: Social Science Research Council, 2007. Print.
- Vaidhyathan, Siva. *The Googlization of Everything (and Why We Should Worry)*. Berkeley: U of CA Press, 2011. Print.
- <http://www.wheredoyougo.net/>



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