MULTI MEDIA WRITING 419

INSTRUCTOR

Trinity Overmyer
trinity@purdue.edu

OFFICE HOURS

HEAV 301A
M/W: 10:30-11:30

COURSE MATERIALS

Blackboard account
(for access to texts)

Google Drive

Professional Printing
(not to exceed $50)

English 419 introduces fundamental rhetorical theories, principles, and practices of multimedia composition. The main objective is for you to heighten you understanding of critical theories of multimedia and new media technologies, with a particular emphasis on visual rhetoric and multimedia research. Since multimedia is, by nature, interactive, we will cover the rhetorical nature of interactivity, the relationship of the audience—or users—to interactivity, and the discovery of innovative methods for successfully interacting with others through multimedia. You will explore these theories through projects that require creative engagements with a variety of technologies and users.

This section will explore the connections between:

DESIGN ——— **ACTION** ———
PERCEPTION ——— **ETHICS**

How do the ways we design texts, interfaces, and digital experiences influence the actions of our users? As multimedia composers, what are our responsibilities to our users? As digital writers, if we do have the ability to influence action, perhaps even perceptions, then it is our responsibility to advocate for our users and always consider the ethics of this process. This course will explore the intersection of these topics by considering and producing several kinds of multimedia writing and design, including work with LTHC, a community organization serving the homeless in Tippecanoe County.

This course is a combination of theoretical reading and discussion, and production of texts that consist of multiple media.

KEY QUESTIONS

Do multimedia and digitality change the way we think and operate in the world?

How does the message interact with the media?

How is traditional text-based writing different from composing in an age of multimedia?

COURSE GOALS

FUNCTIONAL

Gain experience learning platforms and technologies, and deciding which tools are most appropriate for a desired effect or purpose.

Design a range of multimedia products using color, typography, images, transitions, and other tools in order to produce compelling and professional projects.

Execute extended and sometimes complex projects across long periods of time and within groups.

RHETORICAL

Cultivate a heightened understanding of how to navigate complex digital environments in order to both find information and disseminate information.

Experience identifying artifacts of interest, tracing their origins and influences, and hypothesizing how these artifacts can influence action in the world.

Create sophisticated multimedia texts that take different concerns of audience and publics into consideration.

Practice considering the ethical implications of multimedia texts on the populations they are created by and for.

CRITICAL

Evaluate the rhetorical effectiveness of media artifacts.

Identify specific genre conventions of multimedia artifacts and compare content and conventions across different genres.

Consider the ways different forms of media restructure thought, action and circulation in the social and personal realm.

Interrogate the critique of multimedia creations as interactive, both physically and intellectually.

EXPECTATIONS

PARTICIPATION

You will receive points for your valuable participation in this class through speaking in class discussions, coming to class prepared, engaging thoughtfully with the material, being generous with your peer's comments & work, and working industriously during class work time. The participation grade will be evaluated at the middle and end of the semester, partially through a reflective memo written by each of you. More details to come.

READINGS

The first half of this class is primarily theoretical. The readings are fairly dense and you will need to spend a significant amount of time working with the readings to understand each author's perspective. During class and projects, you should demonstrate that you have 1) read the reading and 2) tried to understand the author's point. It will also serve as a springboard for class discussion.

SEMESTER UNITS

1
DOCUMENT DESIGN BASICS & INTRO TO MEDIA

We begin the class by discussing new media and move into the impact of design on people's actions and perceptions. The goal of this small unit is to learn and practice basic elements of visual design principles and interrogate the ways in which design has real material consequences in the world.

2
PATTERN LANGUAGES IN MEDIA

In this unit, we will explore the basic patterns we see in specific genres of media. We will research the patterns that exist, both now and historically, and then create a text in groups that breaks down the building blocks that make up these genre patterns. Your group will either study 1) the patterns of propaganda or 2) the patterns of non-profit or advocacy campaigns.

3
PUBLIC MEDIA IN ACTION

This unit asks students to develop a project for LTHC Homeless Services, while working with their clients and staff. You will be introduced to LTHC's goals and vision, and in groups, you will use insights gained from course materials to create a a professional-grade project for LTHC, which will then be presented to and handed over to the organization for their use. This project is contingent on the needs of the organization, so more to come.

4
BIG DATA & DATA VISUALIZATION

What is data? What is big data? How is high performance computing changing the way we make sense and communicate about the world? How is data rhetorical? What is the place of visual design in data analysis? Is data rhetorical? This unit will explore such questions and consider how data analysis is a form of media composition.

5
SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTION

This unit will focus on remediating a project from this class into a scholarly artifact, rather than just an assign- ment. In order to be a scholarly contribution, your work must join a current scholarly conversation, be fully researched, and presented for an outside audience. These projects may take the form of a research poster and multimedia component aimed at a scholarly audience, or we may collaborate on an article for the Purdue Undergraduate Research journal or the Engagement journal on campus.

COURSE POLICIES

ENGAGEMENT

We as a class expect and need you to be fully present and invested during our short class time. See attached Rules of Engagement handout.

ATTENDANCE

This class works best when every student participates in discussions and in class activities. For that reason, attendance is required and you must show up on time. You are allowed **4 free unexcused absences** to use as you need. Think of these like personal days. Five absences will decrease your final grade by 10%, and another 5% for each unexcused day thereafter. Excused absences will be granted in accordance with University policy.

Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member through the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS). Students will be excused for funeral leave and given the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning out-comes for missed assignments or assessments in the event of the death of a member of the student's family. See the University's website for additional information.

Each late arrival will be counted as half an absence. You are responsible for information you miss during an absence. Check with a classmate for class notes, changes in assignments, special announcements, etc. Do not ask me unless you have exhausted all other avenues. Any in-class work completed on a day you are absent cannot be made up.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

TO: trinity@purdue.edu

SUBJECT: Insert meaningful subject

Greeting

Concise and direct message

Closing with your name

TECHNOLOGY

We rely on it for everything, but hopefully, if you are taking this class, you also love it a little. Primarily, what I expect is that you stay on task—you will have a great deal of freedom in this class, so I expect an equal amount of professionalism in exchange for that freedom. If your phone or computer becomes a distraction or disruption, this fact will be reflected in your participation grade, and I reserve the right to ask you to leave for the day, which will result in an absence. Our class is in a Mac lab, but you are allowed to bring in your own laptop if you'd prefer that on a day-to-day basis. If I find that you are using this privilege to distract yourself during class, I reserve the right to ban laptops and other devices from the lab. Don't ruin this for the entire class.

We do have an ITAP printer in our lab, but because it is loud, please refrain from printing except for before and after class begins.

LATE WORK

Late work will not be accepted. A project is considered late when it is not submitted by the time and in the manner specied. Additionally, lost files, crashed computers, or other technical difficulties will not be considered a legitimate excuse for late work. You have a plethora of resources available here at Purdue for you to back up your work with: email your paper to yourself, save it on Google Drive, store it on a flash drive, save it to your personal H drive on Purdue's network, etc.

That being said, in professional environments you may ask for an **extension** on your deadlines. ese extension requests must be submitted to me in writing (via email) **at least 48 hours before the due date**. I will reply via email if your request is approved or denied. All extensions are for 48 hours past the original due date. An approved extension will not affect your grade, but do not over-use this professional courtesy.

ETHICS & PLAGIARISM

This means the copying, deliberately or not, of another person's work and/or ideas without the proper citation. This is a very serious issue and can result in failure of the project, the course, and other disciplinary action through the Office of the Dean of Students. Because of the nature of this particular class, we will be wrestling with issues of remix, copyright, and intellectual property, where lines between plagiarism, ethics, and fair use can get blurry. When in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, check with me. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Purdue Honors Pledge: As a boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together - we are Purdue.

Purdue prohibits "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, Student Regulations] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972]. See https://www.purdue.edu/odos/academic-integrity/

ALTERNATE LEARNING & CLASSROOM RESOURCES

If you require alternate accommodations for this class, please email me within the first week of class to make arrangements for the semester. I am happy to find solutions that work with your individual learning styles. You should also present a "Letter of Accommodation" to me from the DRC (Disability Resource Center). Contact the Disability Resource Center at Purdue: http://www.purdue.edu/odos/drc/

GRADING

You will receive [and help construct] rubrics for each major unit. However, all of your work in this course should:

- meet the requirements of the project
- be well-informed and thoughtful
- be respectful of audience
- be grammatically and stylistically sound
- be rhetorically effective for its intended purpose.

The final grading scale follows standard Purdue divisions. Final grades will not be rounded up.

A	94-100%	**C**	74-76.9999%
A-	90-93.9999%	**C-**	70-73.9999%
B+	87-89.9999%	**D+**	67-69.9999%
B	84-86.9999%	**D**	64-66.9999%
B-	80-83.9999%	**D-**	60-63%
C+	77-79.9999%	**F**	Below 60%

FINALLY . . .

I want each of you to succeed in this course and maybe even find some intellectual & creative fulfillment from your work this semester.

Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas about the class or any of your projects.