

English 5330: Rhetoric of New Media
Thursday 6:00-9:00 PM
Fall 2018
Texas A&M University - Central Texas

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Kirchoff

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Office Hours: Tuesday 11-12; Thursday 11-12 and 1-4 PM. Other times may be available by appointment.

UNILERT (The Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University–Central Texas)

UNILERT is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in UNILERT through their myCT email account. Connect at www.TAMUCT.edu/UNILERT to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in UNILERT, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

A study of written language theories. Course contents include readings from a wide spectrum including classical Greece and Rome, the European enlightenment, nineteenth century America, and modern and post-modern periods. May be retaken for credit when topics vary.

Dr. Kirchoff's Description

This graduate seminar will examine new media from a variety of theoretical perspectives and lenses in an effort a) to determine what, exactly, new media is and what it encompasses b) to determine how we can make meaning from new media texts and c) to understand why new media theory is relevant and imperative to rhetorical studies today. This discussion-driven course will help students not only understand the major new media theories of yesterday and today but will also provide hands-on practice applying those theories by analyzing a wide range of new media texts.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to...

- Understand and define the term “new media”
- Become familiar with several competing (and complementary) theories of new media
- Appreciate the historical foundations of new media studies
- Analyze texts using new media theory as a framework

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

The Language of New Media by Lev Manovich [ISBN 0262632551]

New Media: The Key Concepts by Nicholas Gane and David Beer [ISBN 978184520133]

The New Media Reader (abbreviated *NMR*) edited by Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort [ISBN 0262232278]

Other readings will be made available on Canvas

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Graded Work

Weekly Reading Responses—25% of Final Grade

- We will be covering a different new media concept each week and as such, we'll be reading multiple articles and chapters in any given week. To ensure student comprehension, each student is expected to write short (think the equivalent of 2-3 typed pages) synthesized responses to that week's readings. Most often, there will be a prompt for students to respond to (found on the tentative daily agenda). As you reply to the question, try to put the texts in conversation with one another. Students should attempt to isolate the major ideas presented in all the articles that week and, when appropriate, interrogate or explore specific aspects of a text. These responses can be exploratory, but they must attempt to make connections between the readings covered in the week. One should be able to tell the student spent thoughtful time with each reading assigned. Responses are due at the beginning of each class.

Note that if you turn in a response late or fail to turn in a response at all, you will earn an "F" for that particular response.

Book Review—20% of Final Grade

- Students will select a book on new media (a suggested list will be provided by Kirchoff) and write a book review suitable for publication in an academic, scholarly journal. A full assignment sheet will be distributed with further details.

Final Research Paper—25% of Final Grade

- Students can expect to write a 15 to 20-page term paper at the end of the semester that explores some aspect of new media and/or new media theory. A full assignment sheet will be distributed with further details.

Final Presentation—10% of Final Grade

- Students will make a 15-minute presentation based on their final research paper at the end of the semester. A full assignment sheet will be distributed with further details.

Participation—20% of Final Grade

- Participation is expected of all of us. Please come to class ready to ask questions, share ideas, and provide feedback to others. After each class period, through questions asked and ideas shared with others, I should be able to clearly tell that students completed the assigned reading. In-class discussions, free-writing exercises, take-home work, and so forth are all part of participation as well. Attendance is discussed at length in the "course policies" section; simply put, showing up to class on a regular basis is key to

your success in this course. When you are not here, you cannot participate meaningfully and thus you lose out on some interaction that can facilitate your new media education.

Note: All assignments must be completed to earn a passing mark in the class.

Grading Scale

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

60-69 = D

59 and below = F

COMMUNICATING WITH DR. KIRCHOFF

Email is the best way to reach me. I typically check my email at least once a day, and I will make a good faith effort to respond to email within 24 hours of my receipt of your message. If you would like to meet in person, I am available during office hours, and am often amenable to appointments outside my regular office hours.

RESOURCES AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Please note that you have a bevy of resources at your disposal to help you with your work this semester. First and foremost, please know that I am here to help and answer questions. Utilizing my office hours to chat about course readings and course material is a great way to informally see how you're doing with the material. Emailing questions about your work and how you are understanding it is perfectly acceptable. Secondly, please be aware that the Writing Center is an excellent resource made available to all TAMUCT students—even graduate students like yourselves. Whether you're struggling to come up with an idea, battling over how to wrap up your essay, or simply want an extra set of critical eyes to peruse your work, the Writing Center is there to help. I encourage each and every one of you to visit the Writing Center at least once during the semester.

Additionally, this class demands a lot of reading, and some of it may consist of ideas you are unfamiliar with. While you can bring any/all questions you have to class, you are still expected to complete all the assigned reading. Please budget your time accordingly.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not urge all of you to be very mindful of deadlines. Please do not wait until the last minute to (a) do course reading or (b) complete course writing. Studies have shown time and time again that the more time you allot yourself to complete projects, the more successful you will be.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Because so much of the learning process takes place in the classroom, attendance is an integral part of this class. Additionally, I value all voices in the classroom and enjoy the dynamic a full class offers. That said, I understand emergencies do occur and that individuals

have a life beyond academia. Thus, students are afforded two “free” absences; please note I do not need to know about the nature of your absence—just let me know ahead of time if you will miss class (a 24-hour notice is appreciated). For each absence after the second, the offending student’s “Attendance and Participation” grade will go down a full letter grade (e.g., three absences will mean the best possible “Attendance and Participation” grade will be a “B”). If a student has missed five or more classes, a passing mark cannot be achieved for the course.

Students who fall asleep, spend an entire class period on their phone, or are otherwise disengaged will be counted absent.

Late Assignments are not accepted unless prior arrangements have been made. This is a non-negotiable policy; however, if you have questions or are worried about completing an assignment on time, talk to me well before the due date and we can come up with a plan of action. Note: “well before the due date” does not mean 24 hours before the assignment is due. I generally like to hold these sorts of conferences a week ahead of the due date. If someone contacts me 24 hours before a project is due, my response may not be very favorable. This policy extends to daily/weekly work as well.

Plagiarism occurs when one person presents another person's words or ideas as her/his own; this can occur intentionally and unintentionally. An example of plagiarism might be a paper that does not have any in-text citations when outside research is being used or an essay that is missing a works cited page. Regardless of intentionality, it is a serious offense; should any plagiarism surface in any project, you will receive an F on that specific project. Should it happen again, it will result in an automatic F for the semester. Please see me if you have any questions concerning plagiarism.

Email is a great tool for communication. However, I ask that when you send me an email to use a proper salutation (e.g. Hi Dr. Kirchoff), complete sentences, and identifying information. This is a matter of common courtesy. As I mention above, I will make a good faith effort in responding to email queries within 24 hours.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

- When others are talking—including peers or the instructor—do not engage in side-conversations or otherwise distract from the conversation taking place.
- Avoid tangential or inappropriate threads of conversation. For example, discussing a random “hook-up” is not appropriate conversation for the college classroom.
- I try to give space for all students to share their ideas; thus, please be courteous of others and make sure everyone has the opportunity to talk.
- Please arrive to class on time. If you do arrive late, please quietly take the closest open seat to the door. This means that students should not start talking to peers, slam down books, throw a back-pack on the table, and so forth. Additionally, if you will be more than five minutes late to class, please extend the courtesy of taking an absence that day.
- Please wait to gather and put away course materials until I have dismissed class.

- Respect for people’s ideas, thoughts, and questions are paramount to your success in this class. My goal is for everyone to feel welcome and comfortable in this class, so please treat everyone in a courteous manner. This should be a friendly, positive environment open to discussion and feedback. Bear in mind that disrespect—towards peers or to the instructor—will not be tolerated in any form. Thus, interruptions of others, ridiculing of ideas, raised voices, derogatory language, name-calling, and intimidating behavior will not be allowed in any form. Should I see such behavior occurring, you will be asked to leave the class and you will be counted absent for that day.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR

--Schedule is tentative and subject to change. To that end, some class periods may shift to “online”; however, fair notice will be given to each student.

8.30

- Introductions
- Overview of Syllabus
- Discussion: What is New Media?

Reading for 9.6

The “Godfather” of New Media: Marshall McLuhan

Marshall McLuhan [NMR 193]

- “The Medium is the Message” (from *Understanding Media*)
- “The Galaxy Reconfigured or the Plight of Mass Man in an Individualist Society” (from *The Gutenberg Galaxy*)

Responses to McLuhan (available on Canvas):

Florian Brody

- “The Medium is the Memory”

Jeff Rice

- “I am McLuhan”

Writing for 9.6

Reading Response: Post a reading response to the four readings. Try to make connections.

What is your understanding of McLuhan? How do Brody’s and Rice’s interpretation of McLuhan differ from your own? What questions do you have? How do you see McLuhan’s ideas of “New Media” in textual production today?

9.6

- Interview with McLuhan
- Discussion of McLuhan
- Activity: Is the Medium the Message?

Reading for 9.13

Simulation: Enzensberger vs Baudrillard

Hans Magnus Enzensberger [NMR 259]

- “Constituents of a Theory of the Media”

Jean Baudrillard [NMR 277]

- “Requiem for the Media”
Gane and Beer
- Chapter 7 “Simulation”

Writing for 9.13

Reading Response: Post a reading response to the three readings. Do you agree with Baudrillard’s critique of McLuhan and Enzensberger? What relationships can be made between Enzensberger, Baudrillard, and McLuhan? How does your interpretation of the readings compare to Gane and Beer’s interpretation of simulation? How would you define simulation?

9.13

- *Matrix* clip
- Interview with Baudrillard clip
- Discussion of Readings
- Baudrillard and “Fake News”

Reading for 9.20

Network(s)

- Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari [*NMR 405*]
 - Excerpt from *A Thousand Plateaus*
- Manuel Castells [on Course Site]
 - “The Space of Flows” from *The Rise of the Network Society*
- Gane and Beer
 - Chapter 2 “Network”

Writing for 9.20

Reading Response: Post a reading response to the three readings. How do you think the concept of network can be applied to read texts? How do you see the concept of network applying to the notions of “simulacra” or “the medium as the message”? What networked texts do you regularly interact with?

9.20

- Deleuze and Guattari overview
- Discussion of readings
- Analysis of Social Networking Sites
- Introduce Book Review Project

Reading for 9.27

Materiality

- Donna Haraway [*NMR 515*]
 - “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century”
- N. Katherine Hayles [on Course Site]
 - “Print is Flat, Code is Deep: The Importance of Media Specific Analysis”
- Gane and Beer
 - Chapter 3: “Information”

Writing for 9.27

Reading response: Do you actively think about how information is materialized? What difference do you think material affordances make? Do you consciously think about what material artifacts you use when you create a text? How might materiality work as an analytical tool of new media texts? Of any text?

9.27

- Discussing cyborgs
- Feminist influences on new media studies
- Discussion of readings
- Analyzing materiality

Reading for 10.4

Interfaces

Lev Manovich

- From *The Language of New Media* Chapter 2 “The Interface”

Gane and Beer

- Chapter 4: “Interface”

Writing for 10.4

Reading response: How do you understand Manovich’s Cultural Interface? Gane and Beer suggest that interface shifts new media theory in the direction of how connections are made. Do you agree? Discuss the relationship between systems, machines, and bodies as you understand it. Does the notion of interface improve your understanding of the aforementioned relationship(s)?

10.4

- Introduction to Lev Manovich: Reviewing his first chapter
- Discussion of readings
- Interface analysis

Reading for 10.11

Tools of New Media

Lev Manovich

- From *The Language of New Media* chapter 5 “The Forms”

Gane and Beer

- Chapter 5 “Archive”

J. David Bolter [NMR 679]

- From *Writing Space* “Seeing and Writing”

Writing for 10.11

Reading Response: How have operations of new media advanced since these three writings? Considering what we have read so far this semester, how do you think new media composers determine their mode of communication? How does the notion of “archive” fit in with “tools of new media”?

10.11

- Exploring different writing spaces

- Relationship between operations and interface
- Discussion of readings
- Analyzing Databases

Reading for 10.18

Book reviews TBD [available on Course Site]

10.18

- Overview of Book Reviews
- Final project proposals and conference abstracts

Readings for 10.25

Interactivity

Lev Manovich

- From *The Language of New Media* chapter 4 “The Illusions”

Gane and Beer

- Chapter 6 “Interactivity”

Myron W. Krueger [NMR 377]

- “Responsive Environments”

Writing for 10.25

Reading response: Craft your own discussion question and response.

10.25

- Levels of interaction
- Overview of “hot” and “cold” media
- Discussion of readings
- Playing with New Media: Determining Interaction Levels

Readings for 11.1

Lev Manovich

- From *The Language of New Media* chapter 6 “What is Cinema?”

Walter Benjamin [on Course Site]

- “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”

Third Reading TBD

Writing for 11.1

Reading response: Like last week, please craft your own discussion question to respond to.

11.1

- The language of cinema and new media
- Discussion of readings
- Viewing and analysis of short film clips

Reading for 11.8

Video Games

Espen J. Aarseth

- “Introduction: Ergodic Literature” from *Cybertext*

Sherry Turkle [NMR 299]

- “Video Games and Computer Holding Power”
Markku Eskelinen
- “Game Ecology and the Classic Game Model” from *Cybertext Poetics*

Writing for 11.8

Reading response: How are video games new media? Can text-based games and image-driven games both be new media? How so? How can we use earlier new media theories to understand video games? What is your experience with video games?

11.8

- Fun with video games
- Discussion of reading

Readings for 11.15

Hypertext and Digital Literature

Stuart Moulthrop [*NMR* 691]

- “You Say You Want a Revolution? Hypertext and the Laws of Media”

George P. Landow [available on Course Site]

- “Hypertext as Collage Writing”

Read one of the Selected Digital Literature Pieces from our Course Site

Writing for 11.15

Reading response: Respond to the two readings and whichever digital literature piece you selected. How does our understanding of hypertext influence our reading of literature? How can the language of new media be applied to the so-called “digital humanities”? How would you define the digital humanities?

11.15

- Discussion of readings
- Analysis of hypertext and digital humanities
- **Book Reviews Due**

Reading for 11.29

Remediation

J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin

- Read “Immediacy, Hypermediacy, and Remediation” and “Mediation and Remediation” from *Remediation*. Available on our Course Site

Writing for 11.29

Reading response: We’ve read about Bolter and Grusin in some of our earlier theory readings. How do you think Bolter and Grusin’s theory of remediation adds to the conversation of new media? Compare Manovich and Bolter & Grusin. What similarities are there? Differences? Do you agree that there is no such thing as “new” media?

11.22—No Class (Thanksgiving)

11.29

- Discussion of readings

- Analysis of *Wikipedia* and *Encyclopedia Britannica*
- Analysis of Comic Book Captions and Silent Film Intertitles
- Analysis of Robin Hood

12.6

- Presentations

12.13 (Finals)

- Final papers due

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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

- Students are encouraged to save work to multiple locations (e.g. computer hard-drive and thumb drive); papers lost due to technological issues will not be a sufficient excuse for failing to turn in work.

Technology Support

For technology issues, students should contact Help Desk Central.

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): <http://hdc.tamu.edu>

When calling for support please let your support technician know you are a TAMUCT student.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must go to the Registrar's Office and complete a drop request form.

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the University Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled.

If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the

drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

Access & Inclusion

At Texas A&M-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit <http://www.tamuct.edu/departments/access-inclusion>.

TUTORING

Tutoring is available to all TAMUCT students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.

If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Kim Wood at k.wood@tamuct.edu.

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables TAMUCT students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. To access Tutor.com, go to the 'My Courses' tab in Blackboard.

University Writing Center

Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10am-5pm Monday-Thursday. Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available). Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process.

While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help!

If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at TAMUCT are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the TAMUCT main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit <https://tamuct.libguides.com/>

