

Field Examination
Multimedia Critique, Design, and Theory

Spring 2000

INSTRUCTIONS:

You have four hours to complete this examination.

You must answer *one* question set from Part I (Critique and Design) and *one* question from Part II (Theory). Part Ia is worth 40 marks; Part Ib, 20 marks, Part II, 40 marks.

PART I: CRITIQUE AND DESIGN

- 1a. Choose ONE area of content that is covered by BOTH assigned texts. Compare the strengths and weaknesses of the design of the two texts. With reference to at least THREE titles from Theory list and THREE from the Critique and Design List, attend to at least two modes (visual images, written text, spoken text, sound, video) employed by the texts.
- 1b. Imagine that the two assigned texts are published by the same organization, and that you have been hired by the organization to redesign the two texts so that their designs complement one another as closely as possible. Suggest changes in the design of ONE of the texts to help accomplish this goal, providing detailed reasons for your choices. Your answer must make reference to at least FIVE different titles (from either or both categories of the reading list).

OR

- 2a. Use standard system notation to describe any ONE interaction between TWO semiotic modes as they occur in the ELECTRONIC multimedia text. Specify your entry condition, label the systems of choices, and provide a sample of at least five different outputs (structures) generated by the system. For each of the five outputs, evaluate their relative rhetorical efficacy, given the register of the text.
- 2b. Imagine that the two assigned texts are published by the same organization, and that you have been hired by the organization to redesign the two texts so that their designs complement one another and closely as possible. What changes would you make to ONE interaction between TWO semiotic modes in the PRINTED multimedia text to help accomplish this goal. Using at least THREE titles (from either or both categories of the Reading List), discuss why you would make these changes.

PART II: THEORY

1. Kress and van Leeuwen have argued, "The place of language in public forms of communication is changing. Language is moving from its former, unchallenged role as *the* medium of communication, to a role as *one* medium of communication, and perhaps to the role of the medium of comment, albeit more so in some domains than in others, and more rapidly in some areas than in others." (Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*). Discuss this argument with reference to at least THREE works from the Theory list.
2. One chapter in *From Page to Screen: Taking Literacy into the Electronic Era* discusses the need for certain academic disciplines to lessen the activity of critiquing and increase the activity of making, an argument made earlier, in a much different way, by Brenda Laurel in *Computers as Theater*. With reference to at least THREE works from the Theory list, discuss how such a change might affect the way multimedia is thought about – and taught – as an academic discipline.
3. How might you distinguish between the concept of multimodality and multimedia? Offer your own definition of each, and then explain how you might use this distinction to contribute to the current discussions in the field as represented by at least three authors from the reading lists.