

Multimedia Design and Critique Field Examination
Department of English, University of Waterloo
Doctor of Philosophy Program
November 2007

This exam will be on the reading list for Multimedia Design and Critique, and a supplementary list composed by the candidate in consultation with the chair of the examining committee. That list will have at least 10 and no more than 20 texts on it, which can be drawn upon for any answer to the questions on the exam. The supplementary list must be prepared and submitted to the examining committee for approval no less than three months before the sitting of the exam.

The exam structure is as follows.

There are three sections. In each section, candidates will have a choice of questions, and will answer one. Sections A and B will offer three choices; Section C will offer two.

Part A: Theory (35%)

Part B: Critique and Design (35%)

Part C: Redesign Practicum (30%)

Part C will have the student submit, eight weeks before the exam, a list of four multimodal digital object texts, in formats usable by committee members and archived in a way that guarantees the texts will not change in the next three months. These texts must include at least *four* of the following multimodal categories: text, images (multiple), animation, video, sound, haptics. These texts must be approved by the committee, with the final list of object texts filed with the Graduate Chair four weeks before the exam. The committee will compose two redesign questions about one or more of these texts. The student will answer one of these questions in the exam.

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Part A Theory (35%)

Answer ONE of the following:

- 1) “Metaphor,” broadly conceived, has played a crucial role in the theorization of interface. Discuss. Please refer to at least THREE works from the THEORY list in your answer.
- 2) Drawing on at least THREE texts from the THEORY list, compare and contrast “textual literacy” and “visual literacy.”
- 3) Discuss some of the pertinent issues associated with the construction of identity in virtual spaces. Please refer to at least THREE texts from the THEORY list in your answer.

Part B: Critique and Design (35%)

Answer ONE of the following:

- 1) Drawing on theories of design and best practices, develop a rationale for using multimodal (as opposed to monomodal) texts for medical—particularly anatomy— instruction. Explain the advantages obtained for both instructors and learners, as well as any drawbacks. Refer to at least FIVE authors from the Critique and Design list and/or your supplemental list in your answer.
- 2) Discuss the ways in which visualization of the body via illustrated print materials contributed to the emergence of medical science in the modern period. Refer to at least FIVE authors from the Critique and Design list and/or your supplemental list in your answer.
- 3) Develop a framework for assessing aspects of the effectiveness of the delivery of historical medical and anatomical materials in multimedia form. Your answer should draw on works of theory and works about design. You may cite examples from the assigned object texts. Refer to at least FIVE authors from the Critique and Design list and/or your supplemental list in your answer.

Part C: Redesign Practicum (30%)

Answer ONE of the following:

1) You have been contacted by the Angel Corporation to consult on the UW ACE website. Waterloo has complained about some of the features and functionality of the ACE package, especially as it relates to the delivery of online courses in the humanities. Your task thus has three components: first, an assessment of the ACE site overall with attention to its conformity to best practices of design and interactivity; second, consultation with Waterloo about their particular issues with ACE; third, suggestions about suitable features and functions that would resolve these complaints.

2) The Blake Archive was one of the first sites to emerge in the digital humanities “revolution.” It has recently received a huge Getty grant, and a good chunk of the money is earmarked for a major redesign of the interface. Based on your analysis of its design, write a memo to its editors outlining its strengths and weaknesses. Include specific suggestions for improvement.

Sites for the exam:

Merck Medicus free interface for the Visual Human project

http://www.merckmedicus.com/pp/us/hcp/frame_emedtool_search.jsp?pg=ppdocs/us/hcp/content/emed/Content.htm

Merck Online Medical Manual

<http://www.merck.com/pubs/mmanual/>

Blake Archive

<http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/>

UW ACE

<https://uwangel.uwaterloo.ca/uwangel/frames.aspx>