ENGL 108D: Digital Lives

Prof. Aimée Morrison
Hagey Hall 269, 888-4567 x37533
Office hours: Wednesday, 10:00–12:00
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Course description:

This course offers “an examination of how digital communication technologies create and promote on-line identities and social spaces, as well as interpersonal and communal interactions.”

In addition to studying the who, what, where, why, and how of “digital lives,” this course is focused on helping you develop your skills as an academic reader and writer in the discipline of English. So we’re going to do a lot of reading about writing, and of course, a lot of writing. And we’re going to explicitly address what it means to study at a university, and how best to go about doing this.

Course learning outcomes:

The design of the content and schedule of the course is determined by our goals of scholarly engagement with the idea and practice of ‘digital lives,’ and of becoming stronger academic writers in a university setting.

Foundational Knowledge—by the end of the course you should be able to:
Identify the basic terms by which scholars study and theorize the Internet
Write clear and persuasive short academic papers, supported by evidence
Discuss how and why people engage with one another online

Application—over the course of the term you will:
Take notes from textbooks to understand, remember, and apply new ideas
Interpret texts using scholarly methods of analysis
Frame persuasive arguments in writing

Integration—this course encourages you to:
Develop a clear, concise, and scholarly ‘voice’
Write more professionally: conceive, research, draft, edit, and proofread your work
Connect our reading and writing strategies to the larger project of your degree

This course is reading intensive, writing intensive, and participation intensive: I expect you to do the readings, take careful notes, show up, and take part.
Course meeting times

The course meets twice weekly, Mondays and Wednesday from 2:30-4:00, in Hagey Hall 280.

Please feel free to contact me with any concerns or questions you have about the class, the readings, or the assignments. I will be in my office during the hours noted, and I’m always very happy to have you drop by during these times, or by appointment at other times. Beyond office hours, contact is probably best initiated via email.

Email policy: Email is fast, but it is not instant. I will read your emails within 1 business day, and I will respond within 2 business days. I do not address major questions of substance (“Can you explain what the chapter was about, because I missed class?”) in emails, but will use it to make appointments with you, or to clear up questions of fact (“Can you help me use the digital drop box?”)

Required and Recommended texts

The following texts are required for the course. Bring them to class. All are available for purchase at the University Bookstore in South Campus Hall.


We have a course website: it is available through UW-ACE. You must access this site regularly: this is where links to readings not in the course pack or the textbooks are located, as well as copies of all the handouts.

Additionally, everybody needs a good dictionary at their elbow at all times. I always keep an online one and a print one handy. The Oxford English Dictionary online (accessible via the university library web site) is very thorough, and the Concise Oxford Dictionary or the Canadian Oxford English Dictionary are very good print texts, well-worth the purchase.

Style matters: academic writing is a learned skill—good writing and clear thinking proceed hand in hand. We’ll be using the Little, Brown Compact Handbook, but several prominent and time-tested style bibles (including Strunk and White’s Elements of Style) are available online for free at www.bartleby.com.
Assignments and Mark Distribution

The following are the graded components of the course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>October 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resp. Paper, edited and resubmitted</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>October 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic and Thesis statement</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>November 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>November 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introductory paragraph</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>November 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>November 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submitted Paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>December 1</td>
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Detailed handouts describe what is expected of you from each assignment; please read these carefully (do not throw them out!) and refer to them as you complete the assignments.

Absence and Late Policy

Attendance is vital to your success in this course. If you choose not to attend, you will be missing in-class exercises upon which some of your grades will depend. There are no 'makeups' for this work.

Assignments are due as noted on the assignment sheets and on the UW-ACE calendar; unless prior arrangements are made late assignments will lose 10% per day late, counting weekends. Assignments more than three days late will not be accepted without documentation or explanation.

Rights and Responsibilities

Every member of this class—instructor as well as students—has rights and responsibilities to ensure a pleasant and productive experience for all. We are all answerable to University policies governing ethical behaviour (Policy 33) and academic integrity (Policy 71), as well as to those outlining grievance or dispute procedures (Policy 70). Please consult these documents, available from the website of the university secretariat.

Here are some more specific expectations for this course:

You will:
• know the university policies that govern your behaviour
• attend all scheduled classes
• arrive prepared: with assigned reading and writing completed, and with appropriate materials in hand
• participate actively in your own learning, while respecting the rights of others to learn as well: this means active listening as well as active speaking
• give thoughtful consideration to instructor feedback on written and oral work

I will:

• adhere to the university policies that govern my behaviour
• attend all scheduled classes
• make myself available for consultation in person and over email
• return assignments within 2 weeks
• provide helpful and respectful feedback on your work

On academic dishonesty: it is a serious offense to appropriate the intellectual labour of another to yourself. Plagiarism consists of using the words or ideas of another without proper attribution. I expect that the work you submit in this course will be the product of your own labour, and that your research sources will be scrupulously documented. If you have any concerns or questions about appropriate practice, you are sincerely encouraged to come discuss this with me—I would really like to help.

A final word

Once more, welcome to the course! I hope you find it as valuable as it will be challenging. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you.
Schedule

Welcome! Now what?

Monday, September 13:
• **Homework:** UW-ACE email to instructor. 200 words on “Who I Am, Where I Came From, Why I’m here” due 11:59pm, September 13

Wednesday, September 15:
• **Read:** LBCH Chapters 9 “Study Skills” and 10 “Critical Thinking and Reading” (pp 70-87).

“Reading” Cybercultures

20 September:
• **Read:** NMC Chapter 1, sections “Introducing Cybercultures,” and “The Information Society” (pp 1-7)
• **Read:** LBCH Chapters 8 “Academic Writing” (pp 65-70)

22 September:
• **Read:** NMC Chapter 1, section Key Issues (from Globalization up to Governing Cyberspace, inclusive, pp 7-13)
• **Read:** LBCH Chapter 11 “Argument” (pp 88-103)
• **Read:** linked web page from ACE site
• **Task:** Examine a sample argument

27 September:
• **Read:** NMC Chapter 1, section Key Issues (the rest of is, pp 14-22)
• **Read:** LBCH Chapters 1 “The Writing Situation” and 2 “Invention” (pp 1-13)

29 September:
• **Read:** LBCH Chapters 3 “Thesis and Organization” and 4 “Drafting” (pp 21-36)
• **Task:** Thesis statement work, and organzing ideas

4 October:
• **Read:** NMC Chapter 1, section Cyberculture Studies (pp 23-29)
• **Read:** LBCH Chapters 5 “Revising and Editing” and 6 “Paragraphs” (pp 24-52)

6 October:
• **Read:** LBCH Chapter 7 “Document Design” (pp 52-55)
• **Task:** Draft workshop for response paper
Popular Cybercultures

13 October:
  • **Read:** NMC Chapter 2, sections Key Features of Popular Cybercultures, and Cyberpunk (pp 30-42)
  • **Read:** Coursepack Gibson, “Neuromancer”

18 October:
  • **Read:** NMC Chapter 2, sections Games and Social Networking (pp 42-50, 59-63)
  • **Read:** Coursepack Halpern, “Shit my dad says”
  • **Read:** Twitter feed @shitmydadsays

20 October:
  • **Read:** NMC Chapter 2, sections New Media Art and PCTs, iPods and Podcasting and Genomic Arts and Biomedia (pp 50-58)
  • **Task:** Editing and re-editing workshop (bring graded response paper with you)

Bodies

25 October:
  • **Read:** NMC Chapter 7 “Bodies” (pp 65-86)

27 October:
  • **Read:** LBCH Chapters 50 “Research Strategy” and 51 “Finding Sources” (pp 299-322)

Gender and Sexualities

1 November:
  • **Read:** NMC Chapter 5 section Women and Cyberspace (pp 115-124)
  • **Read:** Coursepack Powell, “Julie and Julia”

3 November:
  • **Read:** LBCH Chapters 52 “Working with Sources” and 53 “Avoiding Plagiarism and Documenting Sources” (pp 322-348)

Subcultures
8 November:
- **Read**: NMC Chapter 4 sections Blogs and Webcams and Women (pp 87-94)
- **Read**: linked website from UW-ACE (the Julie/Julia Project)

10 November:
- **Read**: NMC Chapter 4 sections Cybercrime and Hacking, and Tactical Media, Hacktivism, and Cyberterrorism (pp 94-105)
- **Read**: LBCH Chapters 55 “Working ... Disciplines” and 56 “Reading and Writing About Literature” (pp 351-366)

15 November:
- **Read**: NMC Chapter 4 sections Fans and Fan Communities, Cyberhate, and Cyberfeminism (pp 105-114)
- **Read**: linked website from UW-ACE (fanfic)

17 November:
- **Read**: LBCH Chapter 54 “Writing the Paper” (pp 348-50)

**Public Spaces**

22 November:
- **Read**: NMC Chapter 6 (pp 136-156)

24 November:
- **Task**: Draft Workshop (bring essay drafts to class with you)

**Cybercultures: New Formations**

29 November:
- **Read**: NMC Chapter 7 (pp 157-172)

**Essay time!**

1 December:
- Research paper handed in in class; donut received

7 December:
- Research paper returned; Christmas cookie received