ENGL 108D: Digital Lives

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Hagey Hall 269, 888-4567 x37533
Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 2:00–3:00
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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 aims to help 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 12:30-1:50, in Hagey Hall 150.

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.

Note for Students with Disabilities: The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Technology Policies

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 ("Can you meet with me on Wednesday to talk about the chapter?").

Email policy, part 2: Email is a professional communication medium. Be professional in your communications: use your university email, or at least not one called “pornstar69@hotmail.com” because a) REALLY?? And b) it'll probably get stuck in my spam filter. Make sure your address includes your name. Write respectfully.

Device policy: Mostly, we talk about stuff. With each other. In real time and face to face. There is almost no lecturing in this course, but lots of in-class exercises, group work, and thinking-out-loud. I have designed this course in such a way that you do not need a laptop and unless you have documentation indicating that you require one for a specific purpose, you are not allowed to use a laptop in class. No cell phones: no texting, no Facebook, no Twitter, no Snapchat, nothing. We might have laptop days for writing exercises, but otherwise it’s just you, and your classmates, and your ideas, and me.
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 Learn. You must access this site regularly: this is where links to readings not in the courseware package or the textbooks are located, as well as copies of all the handouts.

Additionally, everybody needs a good dictionary at his or her 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, if you like paper dictionaries.

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*. I wouldn’t make you read so much of it if it didn’t actually matter.

Assignments and Mark Distribution

The following are the graded components of the course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>October 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resp. Paper, edited and resubmitted</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>October 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic and Thesis statement</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>October 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>November 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory paragraph</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>November 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
<td>November 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submitted Paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>November 27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Learn 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. 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 someone else’s words or ideas 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.
**Academic Integrity**

- In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity Webpage](https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/) and the [Arts Academic Integrity Office Webpage](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/current-undergraduates/academic-responsibility) for more information.

**Grievance**

- A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70). When in doubt please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Discipline**

- A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing academic offenses and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm).

**Appeals**

- A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm).

**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

9 September:
- **Homework:** Email me via Learn. 200 words on “Who I Am, Where I Came From, Why I’m here” due 11:59pm, September 9. Send a picture, with you holding a namecard too, so I know who you are!

11 September:
- **Read:** NM introduction and abbreviations (pp xii-xvii)
- **Read:** LBCH Chapters 9 “Study Skills” and 10 “Critical Thinking and Reading” (pp 68-83).
- **Task:** create study notes from handout in class

16 September:
- **Read:** NM Chapter 1 “Introduction to New Media,” to end of Internet History section (pp 1-13)
- **Read:** LBCH Chapter 8, “Academic Writing” (pp 63-68)

18 September:
- **Read:** finish NM Chapter 1 “Introduction to New Media” (pp 13-27)
- **Read:** LBCH Chapter 11 “Argument” (pp 83-98)
- **Read:** linked web page from Learn site

23 September:
- **Read:** NM Chapter 3, “Approaches to New Media (pp 51-71)
- **Read:** LBCH Chapters 1 “The Writing Situation” and 2 “Invention” (pp 1-13)

25 September:
- **Read:** NM Chapter 2, “The History of New Media,” to end of Telephone section (pp 28-41)
- **Read:** LBCH Chapters 3 “Thesis and Organization” and 4 “Drafting” (pp 13-23)
- **Task:** Draft a thesis statement for response paper

30 September:
- **Read:** finish NM Chapter 2, “The History of New Media” (pp 41-50)
- **Read:** LBCH Chapters 5 “Revising and Editing” and 6 “Paragraphs” (pp 23-51)

2 October:
- **Read:** NM Chapter 4, “Mobile New Media” (pp 72-96)
- **Task:** Draft workshop for response paper
7 October:
  - **Read:** NM Chapter 5, “Social Networks and Participatory Culture” (pp 97-121)
  - **Task:** Response Paper due, beginning of class

9 October:
  - **Read:** Courseware package: Justin Halpern, “Shit my dad says” (pp 14-36)
  - **Read:** Twitter feed @shitmydadsays, linked from Learn

16 October:
  - **Read:** Courseware package: Julie Powell, “Disaster/Dinner Party …” (pp 38-50)
  - **Read:** Julie Powell, *The Julie/Julia Project*, linked from Learn
  - **Task:** Editing and re-editing workshop (bring graded response paper with you)

21 October:
  - **Read:** Courseware package: William Gibson, *Neuromancer* Chapter 1 (pp 1-12)
  - **Read:** LBCH Chapter 56 “Reading and Writing about Literature” (pp 340-351)
  - **Task:** Revised Response Paper due, beginning of class

23 October:
  - **Read:** LBCH Chapters 50 “Research Strategy” and 51 “Finding Sources” (pp 287-309)
  - **Task:** Meet in Davis Library for research tutorial with English Librarian, Leanne Romane.

28 October:
  - **Read:** NM Chapter 6 “Games: Technology, Industry, Culture” (pp 122-140)

30 October:
  - **Read:** LBCH Chapters 52 “Working with Sources,” 53 “Avoiding Plagiarism and Documenting Sources” (pp 309-333), and 58 “MLA Documentation and Format” (pp 362-405)
  - **Task:** Topic and Thesis Statement due, beginning of class

4 November:
  - **Read:** NM Chapter 7 “Creative Industries” (pp 141-165)

6 November:
  - **Read:** NM Chapter 8 “The Global Knowledge Economy” (pp 166-191)
  - **Task:** Annotated Bibliography due, beginning of class
11 November:
- **Read**: NM Chapter 9 “Internet Law, Policy, and Governance” (pp 192-221)

13 November:
- **Read**: linked material from Learn
- **Read**: LBCH Chapter 54 “Writing the Paper” (pp 333-336)
- **Task**: Introductory Paragraph due, beginning of class

18 November:
- **Read**: LBCH Chapter 18, “Appropriate and Exact Words,” 19 “Completeness,” and 20 “Conciseness” (pp 1333-150)

20 November:
- **Read**: LBCH Chapter 15 “Emphasis,” 16 “Parallelism,” and 17 “Variety and Details” (pp 117-133)
- **Task**: Draft Workshop (bring essay drafts to class with you)

25 November:
- **Read**: NM Chapter 10 “Conclusion” (pp 222-238)

27 November:
- **Task**: Research Paper due, beginning of class; free donut!

2 December:
- **Task**: Pick up Research paper; homemade cookies!