Department of English Language and Literature
University of Waterloo Spring 2012

Course Syllabus for English 108D: Digital Lives

Instructor: Corrie Shoemaker
Email: elshoema@uwaterloo.ca

Location and Time: HH (Hagey Hall) 150, Tuesday and Thursday 01:00-02:20
Lecture Dates: May 1, 2012- July 25th, 2012
Office Hours: Pas 2215 M/W 2:30-3:30 or email for a separate appointment

Course Objectives:
This course examines how “digital communication technologies create and promote on-line identities and social spaces, as well as interpersonal and communal interactions” (U of Waterloo). The course will analyze how digital media alters, creates and re-creates one’s perceived conception of reality, self-identity, knowledge, communication and self-awareness. We will study the importance of iconography, symbolism, digital identity and the role of media in a communicative world. Some questions to think about include: How is digital media now used to carry out the most basic of human tasks: communicate? How has communication changed (or has it) in the digital age? How have expectations for rapid information and quick response time altered daily life, business operations and global communication?

In addition to studying the history, current uses and critical approaches to digital media this course will also provide you with a background in academic writing skills. We will develop your skills as an academic reader and writer, review grammar, essay research techniques and thesis development. The course will be heavily weighted in reading, writing and critical thinking. By the end of the course each student will be able to intelligently discuss the creation, uses and theories associated with digital media through essay format, identify critical questions and motifs in the digital world (gaming genre, cyberspace etc.) and situate our readings in relation to each other.

Required Texts: Available at the UW Bookstore. Please use assigned editions to ensure you are reading the correct assignment for each week.


Assigned Articles on the LEARN website.

Course Assignments and Policies:

In Class Presentation 10%
Essay 1 10%
Essay 2 20%
Journal for Article Responses 10%
Attendance, Participation and Pop Quizzes 5%
Mid-Term (In Class Essay) 15%
Exam in exam period 30%

**Student Responsibilities:**
Attendance is mandatory to succeed in this course. Students must read all assigned materials (by the dates specified below) and should come to class ready to discuss the readings thoughtfully. When participating in class, students must remain respectful of others’ opinions.

**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 OPD at the beginning of each term.

**Late Policies:**
**Classes:** Late arrivals to class will be taken into account when calculating participation marks. Please make sure that you are on time for all scheduled classes. If you have a legitimate reason for being late (or leaving early), please make sure that you inform me of this.

**Essays:** Essays are due at the start of class. Late papers will be penalized at a rate of 5% for the first day and 2% for each additional day – including weekends. I do not accept papers that are more than a week late. Late paper will also receive fewer comments or only a grade. Extensions on assignments will be granted only in cases of illness or emergency. Please contact me during office hours or via e-mail to make your request. You must provide hard copies of documentation.

**Pop-Quizzes:** There will be no make-up quizzes for students who are late or absent from class on a day a quiz is given. An exception will be made if you provide me with legitimate documentation explaining your absence.

**Mid-Term/Final Exam:** There will be no make ups for students who miss the mid-term/ final exam (unless you are registered with the OPD). I will only make exceptions for students with official documentation that explains their absence. You must notify me via email in advance of the mid-term/final exam.

**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. Please check http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity for more information.

**Discipline:**
A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g. plagiarism, cheating) or about ‘rules’ for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline http://wwwadm.uwaterlooca/infosec/policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties at http://www.adm.uwaterlooca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm
Please note that I will thoroughly investigate all suspected cases of plagiarism and report them to the Associate Dean.

**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) which can be found at http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

**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 which can be found at http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Course Assignments**

**Participation:** In class participation and Pop-Quizzes (5%). Each quiz will include short-answer questions related to the week’s readings and the concepts studied in class.

**Essay 1:** (10%: In-class)
* Assigned essay topics will be distributed in class on May 8th, 2012. Thesis statements are due on May 15th. The in class essay will take place May 24th, 2012.
* Essay topics will pertain to the text readings and articles discussed in class. You will be permitted to bring one index card into the exam with your thesis statement written on it and any necessary data and facts for your essay.

**In-Class Presentations:** (10%: May 29th, June 7th, or July 12th) Each student will sign up for a 15 minute group presentation on one aspect of digital media (gaming community, history of digital media, identity representation/misrepresentation, cell phone communication/texting symbolism etc). Groups will consist of 4-5 students and each presentation will answer a specific question that deals with theory application and themes. The presentation questions/themes will be given in class. Students are expected to bring secondary texts and sources into their presentation, to have a handout for the class and to bring props or visual aids if deemed necessary. A handout must be given to the professor with each presentation. The **Mid-term and Final Exam may contain questions pertaining to your classmates’ presentations so listen up and take notes.**

**Journal for Article Responses:** (10%) One a week you will be required to write a short response to an article or the chapter discussed in class. These responses will be recorded in a journal to be handed in every Tuesday at the beginning of class. They will be marked by myself, handed back on Thursday (along with the next journal assignment) and then used for the following week’s response. This assignment will help you hone your writing skills to a concise, precise art. The responses will be 500-800 words (2-3 pages, Times New Roman font, double spaced) and must include an introductory paragraph providing the thesis of the article and the author’s overall argument. The remainder of the response will involve your own critical thinking about the topic. Please use a bound note book for this exercise. You may type up the assignment and glue it in the note book if you prefer typing to handwriting.

**Mid-Term:** (15%) The mid-term exam will take place on Tuesday, June 19th, 2012 during class time. It will cover all class material, articles and texts on the syllabus.
Essay 2: (20%; about 6-7 pages)
* Assigned essay topics will be distributed in class on June 19th, 2012.
* You will be required to write on one of a number of proposed essay topics. You cannot write on the same topic that you used in Essay 1
* Essays should be prepared in MLA format (double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins, no title page, works cited list). Minimum of 3 Secondary Sources are MANDATORY.
* You must develop a thesis statement and an introductory paragraph to be handed in on July 5th, 2012. When submitting, you must highlight your thesis statement/sentence.
* Thesis paragraphs will be returned on Tuesday July 10th, 2012 with feedback. Students should take my comments into consideration when preparing their final submission. You must hand your thesis statement back in with your final submission July 19th.
* Tuesday July 17th will be a Peer editing class where each student will bring his/her essay to class to be edited by another student.

Essays must also be submitted by e-mail for plagiarism tracking/testing. If any student does not wish to have his/her essay tested please see the professor within the first week of class to discuss a schedule for writing a thesis, an essay outline and two rough drafts before handing in a final copy.

Final Exam: (30%) The exam will be scheduled during a 2.5 hr exam period and will be cumulative.

Schedule:

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<td>Tue, May 1st</td>
<td><strong>Journal Paragraph Response:</strong> 200-500 words on “Who I am, Why I’m Here and How Digital Media has Shaped my World” due May 3rd. Include a picture so I know who you are! <strong>Read:</strong> Article for Thursday’s class on LEARN</td>
<td>Intro to class and Essay writing. What is New Media?</td>
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<td>Thur, May 3rd</td>
<td><strong>Read:</strong> NM introduction and abbreviations (pp xii-xvii) USA Today “Breaking Down Our Digital Consumption.” Source: <a href="http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/story/2012-02-23/nielsen-digital-consumers/53228194/1">http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/story/2012-02-23/nielsen-digital-consumers/53228194/1</a> <strong>Read:</strong> LBCH Chapters 9 “Study Skills” and 10 “Critical Thinking and Reading” (pp 70-87). <strong>Journal Due “Who am I.”</strong> **Article for Tuesday’s journal up on LEARN</td>
<td>Study skills, critical thinking and 2 article discussions.</td>
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<td>Tue, May 8th</td>
<td><strong>In Class Essay Questions Handed out.</strong> <strong>Read:</strong> NM Chapter 1 “Introduction to New Media” (pp 1-13) <strong>Read:</strong> LBCH Chapter 8, “Academic Writing” (pp 65-69) and LBCH Chapter 11 “Argument” (pp 88-103)</td>
<td>Intro to New Media Academic writing and the use of argument</td>
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| Thur, May 10th | **Read** NM Chapter 1 “Introduction to New Media.” (pp 13-27)  
**Read** LBCH Chapters 3 “Thesis and Organization” and 4 “Drafting” (pp 21-36)  
**Article for Tuesday’s journal up on LEARN** | Intro to New Media  
Thesis writing                                      |
| Tue, May 15th | **In Class Thesis statement Due**  
**Read** NM Chapter 3, “Approaches to New Media” (pp 51-71)  
**Read** LBCH Chapters 1 “The Writing Situation” and 2 “Invention” (pp 1-13)  
**Journal Due** | Approaches to New Media                          |
| Thur, May 17th | **Read** NM Chapter 2, “The History of New Media,” to end of Telephone section (pp 28-41).  
**Read** Article for Tuesday’s journal up on LEARN | History of New Media                            |
| Tue, May 22nd | **Read** finish NM Chapter 2, “The History of New Media” (pp 41-50)  
**Read** LBCH Chapters 5 “Revising and Editing” and 6 “Paragraphs” (pp 24-52)  
**Journal Due** | History of New Media                            |
| Thur, May 24th | **In Class Essay**  
**Read** Article for Tuesday’s journal up on LEARN | **In Class Essay**                                      |
| Tue, May 29th | **Class Presentations Part I (3 groups)**  
*Classes in alternative location*  
**Journal Due** | Presentations                                      |
| Thur, May 31st | **Read** NM Chapter 4, “Mobile New Media” (pp 72-96)  
**Article for Tuesday’s journal up on LEARN** | Mobile New Media                                  |
| Tue, June 5th | **Read** NM Chapter 5, “Social Networks and Participatory Culture” (pp 97-121).  
**Journal Due** | NM Chapter 5, “Social Networks and Participatory Culture”  |
| Thur, June 7th | **Class Presentations Part II (3 groups)**  
**Article for Tuesday’s journal up on LEARN** | Presentations                                      |
| Tue, June 12th | **Read** UW LEARN Julie Powell, “Disaster/Dinner Party …”  
**Read** Julie Powell, *The Julie/Julia Project*,  
linked from UW-LEARN  
Adam Singer “Lessons from Blogging Less.” | NM Chapter 5, “Social Networks and Participatory Culture” (pp 97-121).  
Grammar: punctuation |
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| Thur, June 14th | **Read**: UW LEARN assigned article TBA  
**Read**: Review LBCH Chapter 24,25,28,29,30-32, 34-37, 47.  
**Article for Tuesday's journal up on LEARN**               | Review of pronoun usage and grammar errors |
| Tue, June 19th | **Midterm**  
**Second Essay Topics Handed Out**  
**Journal Due**                                         | Midterm                                    |
| Thur, June 21st | **Read**: LBCH Chapters 50 “Research Strategy”  
and 51 “Finding Sources” (pp 299-322)  
**Task**: Research tutorial with English Librarian,  
Leeanne Romane.  
**Article for Tuesday's journal up on LEARN**               | Research Tutorial                           |
| Tue, June 26th | **Read**: NM Chapter 6 “Games: Technology, Industry, Culture” (pp 122-140)  
**Journal Due**                                        | Chapter 6 “Games: Technology, Industry, Culture” |
| Thur, June 28th | **Read**: LBCH Chapters 52 “Working with Sources,” 53 “Avoiding Plagiarism and  
Documenting Sources” (pp 322-348), and 58 “MLA Documentation and Format” (pp 380-423)  
**Article for Tuesday's journal up on LEARN**               | Chapter 6 “Games: Technology, Industry, Culture” |
| Tue, July 3rd  | **Read**: NM Chapter 7 “Creative Industries” (pp 141-165)  
**Journal Due**                                        | Chapter 7 “Creative Industries”            |
| Thur, July 5th | **Read**: NM Chapter 7 “Creative Industries” (pp 141-165)  
**Essay 2 Thesis Statement and Intro Paragraph due**          | Chapter 7 “Creative Industries”            |
| Tue, July 10th | **Read**: NM Chapter 8 “The Global Knowledge Economy” (pp 166-191)  
**Article for Tuesday's journal up on LEARN**               | Chapter 8 “The Global Knowledge Economy”   |
| Thur, July 12th | **Class Presentations Part III (3 groups)**  
**Journal Due**                                         | Presentations                               |
| Tue, July 17th | **REMEMBER**: Bring your Essay to Class to be edited by a peer.  
Essay workshop and article discussion  
**Article for Tuesday's journal up on LEARN**               | Workshop and article review                 |
| Thur, July 19th | **Read**: NM Chapter 8 “The Global Knowledge Economy”  
**Journal Due**  
**Essay 2 Due**  
**Article for Tuesday's journal up on LEARN**               | Chapter 8 “The Global Knowledge Economy”   |
| Tue, July 24th | Exam Review and Essays Returned  
**Journal Due**                                           | Exam Review                                |