ENGL 108D: Digital Lives

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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.

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 1:00-2:20, in RCH 207.

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 AccessAbility Services office (AS), located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, 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 AS office 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’m trying to limit email so I have more moral authority kicking my 10 year old off her iPad. 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. Be in the moment, listening. 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. Both are available for purchase at the University Bookstore in South Campus Hall.
Assignments and Mark Distribution

The following are the graded components of the course:

Writing Assignments:
- Response Paper: 10% February 1
- Resp. Paper, edited and resubmitted: 10% February 13
- Research Paper:
  - Topic and Thesis statement: 10% March 1
  - Annotated Bibliography: 10% March 8
  - Introductory paragraph: 10% March 15
  - Draft: (10%) March 22
  - Submitted Paper: 20% March 29

Tests:
- Quizzes (best 5 of 6): 10% (throughout term)
- Final Exam: 20% (during exam period)

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.

On academic dishonesty and intellectual property: be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the instructor—me. Intellectual property includes items such as:
- Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
- Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides);
- Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or TA or used by the instructor or TA with permission of the copyright owner).

Course materials are used to enhance a your educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. Like Princess Luna you risk a 1000 year banishment to the moon. Don’t do this. Also, please alert me if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, particularly online.
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

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

9 January:
• **Read**: NM introduction and abbreviations (pp ix-xiv)
• **Read**: LBCH Chapters 9 “Study Skills” and 10 “Critical Thinking and Reading” (pp 68-83).
• **Read**: Paul Edwards, “How to Read a Book”
• **Task**: create study notes from handout in class

11 January:
• **Read**: NM Chapter 1 “Introduction to New Media,” to start of the Growth of the Internet section (pp 1-13)
• **Read**: LBCH Chapter 8, “Academic Writing” (pp 63-68)

16 January:
• **Read**: finish NM Chapter 1 “Introduction to New Media” (pp 13-26)
• **Read**: LBCH Chapter 11 “Argument” (pp 83-98)

18 January:
• **Read**: NM Chapter 2, “The History of New Media,” to end of Telephone section (pp 29-43).
• **Read**: LBCH Chapters 1 “The Writing Situation” and 2 “Invention” (pp 1-13)

23 January:
• **Read**: finish NM Chapter 2, “The History of New Media” (pp 44-55)
• **Read**: LBCH Chapters 3 “Thesis and Organization” and 4 “Drafting” (pp 13-23)
• **Task**: Draft a thesis statement for response paper

25 January:
• **Read**: NM Chapter 3, “Approaches to New Media (pp 56-62)
• **Read**: LBCH Chapters 5 “Revising and Editing” and 6 “Paragraphs” (pp 23-51)

30 January:
• **Read**: finish NM Chapter 3, “Approaches to New Media” (pp 62-78)
• **Read**: blog post on Information Literacy, linked on Learn
• **Task**: Draft workshop for response paper
1 February:
- **Read**: NM Chapter 4, “Mobile New Media” (pp 79-103)
- **Task**: Response Paper due, beginning of class

6 February:
- **Read**: NM Chapter 5, “Social Networks and Participatory Culture” (pp 106-118)
- **Read**

8 February:
- **Read**: finish NM Chapter 5, “Social Networks and Participatory Culture” (pp 118-134)
- **Task**: Editing and re-editing workshop (bring graded response paper with you)

13 February:
- **Read**: 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

15 February:
- **Read**: LBCH Chapters 50 “Research Strategy” and 51 “Finding Sources” (pp 287-309)
- **Task**: Research Tutorial with English Subject Area Librarian.

27 February:
- **Read**: NM Chapter 6 “Games: Technology, Industry, Culture” (whole thing)

1 March:
- **Read**: linked material online about gaming
- **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

6 March:
- **Read**: NM Chapter 7 “Creative Industries” (pp 160-172)

8 March:
- **Read**: finish NM Chapter 7 “Creative Industries” (pp 172-187)
- **Read**: NM Chapter 8 “The Global Knowledge Economy” (pp 188-197)
- **Task**: Annotated Bibliography due, beginning of class 10 November:
13 March:
  - **Read:** finish NM Chapter 8 “The Global Knowledge Economy” (pp 197-214)
  - **Read:** LBCH Chapter 54 “Writing the Paper” (pp 333-336)

15 March:
  - **Read:** NM Chapter 9 “Internet Law, Policy, and Governance” (pp 215-230)
  - **Read:** LBCH Chapter 18, “Appropriate and Exact Words,” 19
    “Completeness,” and 20 “Conciseness” (pp 1333-150)
  - **Task:** Introductory Paragraph due, beginning of class

20 March:
  - **Read:** finish NM Chapter 9 “Internet Law, Policy, and Governance” (pp 230-248)
  - **Read:** LBCH Chapter 15 “Emphasis,” 16 “Parallelism,” and 17 “Variety and Details” (pp 117-133)

22 March:
  - **Read:** NM Chapter 10 “Conclusion” (pp 249-270)
  - **Task:** Draft Workshop (bring essay drafts to class with you)

27 March:
  - **Exam Review day:** Terms, Critical Approaches

29 March:
  - **Exam Review day:** Interpretation and Case Studies
  - **Task:** Research Paper due, beginning of class; free donut!

3 April
  - **Task:** Pick up Research paper