University of Waterloo  
Winter Term 2020  
ENGL293 Section 1  
Intro to Digital Media Studies  
Tues/Thurs, 10:00-11:20AM in ECH 1205

Instructor Information
Instructor: Betsy Brey  
Office: 1317A Choco Mountain, The Games Institute, East Campus 1  
Office Hours: Tues/Wed/Thurs 12pm-1pm; or email to make an appointment  
Email: ebrey@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description
A survey of the study of digital media, including critical, rhetorical, and semiotic approaches, and of the interpretation and creation of digital media artifacts.

Course Objectives
By the end of the course, you will:

1. Understand and explain the connections between theoretical, critical and popular discourses concerning the who, what, where, when, why, and how of new media  
2. Engage critically with your own digital media environments  
3. Analyze cultural, material, and immaterial practices, objects, and artifacts of new media  
4. Adapt and explore different conventions of genre, audience, cultural assumptions, and rhetorical context in digital media  
5. Effectively and helpfully collaborate with other students through group work and fair project delegation, both in smaller and larger groups  
6. Create projects in several formats, including a formal essay, weekly informal writing, and a creative/non-traditional multimedia project, demonstrating an informed understanding of core concepts and theories learned

Required Texts

Any additional readings available on Learn, either as a PDF or as a link. Readings are posted to their respective weeks.

Technology in the Classroom
We will be using the course page on Learn frequently in and out of class time. Access to Learn during class is required. This is a digital humanities course, so sometimes we will work online and sometimes offline. When we are working offline, I expect you to be fully engaged with class; you will lose participation points if you are on a device during offline work. When we are working online, if you abuse your tech privilege (by spending class time on social networks, websites, games, platforms etc. unrelated to the weekly topic or immediate discussion), you will lose participation marks at my discretion.
Absences and Attendance
You will note that attendance and participation are worth 15% of your final grade. Absences will impact this grade, as you cannot participate in class if you are not in class. Excused absences, as outlined by University Policy, will not impact your grade. If you have an excusable absence, you are responsible for verifying it as outlined in policy. Attendance is vital to your success in this course. If you choose not to attend, you will be missing points. There are no “makeups” for this work; you are there, or you are not.

Evaluation and Mark Distribution
This course is reading intensive, writing intensive, and participation intensive: I expect you to do the readings before class, take careful notes on the readings before class, show up to class, and take part during in-class activities.

There are five components of your overall mark in this class: course-long participation (20%), a group presentation (20%), weekly discussion boards (20%), a creative project (20%), and a response essay (20%).

Here’s what your marks “mean.”

90-100%: assignments earning 90-100% are truly outstanding and spectacular work that goes well above and beyond the expectations of an assignment at the 200 course-level. This work demonstrates mastery of the subject matter at the undergraduate level.

80-89%: assignments earning 80-89% show excellent, exceptional work. The work is communicated in a polished and effective manner with a great deal of attention to detail.

70-79%: assignments earning 70-79% demonstrate a solid understanding of the material. The work is communicated in an effective, appropriate manner and attention to detail is apparent, expressing an understanding of the material beyond the minimum level of comprehension.

60-69%: assignments earning 60-69% meet the expectations of an assignment but does not surpass expectations. The work shows comprehension and effort but only meets the minimum requirements of a task. These are the average marks for coursework.

50-59%: assignments earning 50-59% do not meet the expectations of the assignment, either due to misunderstanding, not following directions, or by not attending to the required tasks of the assignment.

1-49%: assignments earning 1-49% are failing marks. Academic assignments of any kind earn failing marks usually for two reasons. And your professors can always tell the difference between the two. One kind of assignment may fail because—even though the writer clearly worked conscientiously and made a genuine attempt—a student does not understand the material. It indicates that the student should meet with the professor or a TA or attend peer tutoring in order to understand the course material and the skills required at a university. A different situation is when the assignment was written by a student capable of much better work who has not taken the assignment seriously enough or given it the time it required. Assignments in this category were perhaps written at the last minute, did not go through a thoughtful revision process, and may not have been based on sufficient preparation, reading, or research. Students receiving failing grades in for this reason should interpret them as wake-up calls: careless work will not earn credit in university courses.

0%: the assignment has not been received by the professor.
Note: Grades in the 60-70% range are average and meet the terms of the assignment. Marks in 70-80% are good and worth being proud of; a 75% means I think you have a great understanding of the material and have made good decisions about how to present your knowledge. Marks in the 80-100% range are difficult to obtain and show work above the expectations of a 200-level course. If you earn a 95%, it means it’s one of the best pieces of work I’ve ever seen for this kind of class. Doing the minimum does not earn 90s.

Assignment Submission, Deadlines, and Late Policy
All assignments have a specified format for submission on Learn—either files into the Dropbox, a weekly discussion board, a quiz, or a survey. I will not accept assignments via email unless I specifically ask for an assignment by email. This often only occurs for in-class exercises. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per weekday and may be graded without comments. Papers more than 5 weekdays late will receive a failing grade. But 50% is better than 0%. Turn your work in!

Assignments Descriptions
These descriptions are intended to help you see an overview of the assignment. They do not contain all the requirements of the assignment. Complete assignment sheets and marking rubrics are available on Learn.

Course-long participation (20%): Participation will be marked on a weekly basis. In order to contribute to the best of your ability and earn a high participation grade, you must complete scheduled readings before class. Come to class ready to talk about what you read. You’ll earn participation points in a few ways, including but not limited to: weekly reading quizzes; idea contribution; group work; in-class writing; regular attendance; being on time; staying awake during class; being respectful of your classmates and instructor; in-class activities; and of course, in-class discussion.

Group presentation (20%): In a small group, you will be responsible for reading, taking notes, and presenting the materials from your assigned reading. You and your group will sign up for a topic/date and work together to create a presentation reviewing the core concepts from the reading. Your presentation is intended to be a supplement, not a replacement, for reading the chapter. Consider your role as making a study guide for your classmates. You will create a PowerPoint or Google slides presentation and share your guide with the class. This is not a public speaking assignment, so you will not be marked on your speaking. Presentation date sign-ups will be during the second week of class. There are no make-up dates available for this assignment. Do not sign up for a date you will not be in class. Any sudden changes must be worked out with your group. Following your presentation, one group member will upload your slides and notes to the Dropbox for me to mark. After they are marked, I will add them to Learn so the whole class can use them in their Response Essays at the end of the term. After you present, you must then complete the Group Summary Response Quiz on Learn, located under the “Group Summary Report” tab on the content bar to the left. You will not receive any points for the assignment until you complete this final portion. The presentation is due to the Dropbox before the end of class on the day you present. The Summary Reports are due by Saturday at 11:59PM on the week you present.

Weekly discussion boards (20%): Each week, you are responsible for completing one of the two prompts on the Learn discussion board for that week. You have two options: choose one of the prompts and respond to it in 300-400 words OR choose one of your classmate’s responses to either prompt and respond to that with 300-400 words. The discussion boards are intended to be informal and reflective, encouraging you to connect different theories, concepts, and ideas from class each week. Your lowest
two marks will be dropped. Each board is due Saturday at 11:59PM of the week it is posted. These may be completed for late points up until April 15th at 11:59PM.

Creative project (20%): For this project, you will work in a small group or on your own. Using a one of three supplied format options, you and/or your group will create plan, write, and create a digital story. This may be accomplished in a few possible ways, which will be discussed in class: Option A, netprov; Option B, threaded storytelling project; Option C, Twine game. In addition to submitting your story, each student individually must also submit a personal reflection—a 4-5 page explanation of the project describing your storytelling goals, the ways your story worked with or against the affordances of your digital format, how your group worked together, and what your own contributions to the project were. At the start of the project, everyone must submit a Creative Project Pitch Survey via the Survey function on Learn, which includes an informal description of the story you want to tell and a workflow organization and delegation section. If you have another idea for a storytelling project beyond the suggestions, feel free to discuss it with me during office hours. Reflections are due posted to the Dropbox in Word or PDF format by each student individually. Only one student per group needs to upload the files, images, links, screenshots, etc., for the story itself. The Pitch Survey is due February 27th to the Survey submission by the end of class. The completed assignment—reflection and project itself—are due March 19th by 11:59PM.

Response essay (20%): By the end of class, you will have access to a comprehensive set of notes from presentations over the term, in addition to your Discussion Board posts. For the end of term essay, there will be four prompts to choose from; you will choose two of these prompts and write a 2-3 page essay using the book and the notes you took and collected over the course of the term. No outside research is required or allowed. Prompts will be posted to the Response Essay section on Learn during the last week of class and due posted into the Dropbox in Word or PDF format. This assignment is due April 15th by 11:59PM.

Formatting and Citation
Use MLA (Modern Language Association) Eighth Edition documentation style. Remember to keep frequently updated backup copies in case of computer crashes. There are two helpful links for MLA style in the University Resources section on Learn.

Academic Integrity
In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

- As a student, you are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for your actions. If you are unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or if you need help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about rules for group work/collaboration, you should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean.
- When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, you should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm
- If you believe that a decision affecting some aspect of your university life has been unfair or unreasonable, you may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm
• You may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 -Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 – Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm
• More information: Academic Integrity Office (UW): http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/

Accessibility and Accommodations
AccessAbility Services, (https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/) located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for those of us with disabilities, without compromising the academic integrity of curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to do your best in class, please register at the beginning of each academic term.

In cases where you are experiencing problems either in or outside of class that are affecting your attendance and/or work performance, please keep me informed. On a case-by-case basis, alternative arrangements may be made. In addition, please let me know what I can do that will make the course more accessible to you. The course is intended to be challenging, but the structure of the course itself should not be a barrier to your learning.

Mental Health Support
We all need a support system.

On Campus
• Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 xt 32655
• MATES: one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
• Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek form Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7
• Good2Talk: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
• Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-433 ext. 6880
• Here 24/7: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
• OK2BME: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning folks in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS website, and you can download UWaterloo and regional mental health resources (PDF) and the WatSafe app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

Territorial Acknowledgement
The settler city of Waterloo is founded on stolen land. We are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. But acknowledgement isn't enough. We must actively work against the erasure of Indigenous people’s lives and rights.

A (Hopefully Unnecessary) Reminder about Respect and Safety
We are looking at digital media and discourse about digital media; I do not censor it. It may contain images, content, and language that is problematic, offensive, disturbing, or even traumatizing to some.
To the best of my knowledge, I will give a general announcement about potentially sensitive content before it comes up in class. If you find that specific material is likely to be challenging for you, please discuss any concerns you may have with me before the subject comes up in class. Likewise, if you wish to discuss your reactions to course material with the class or with me individually, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our coursework. If you feel the need to step outside during a class discussion, you may always do so without penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you leave the room for a significant time, plan to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation.

All content we discuss was produced by another human being, and we will speak respectfully about and towards the subjects of and posters of digital media content. You can speak about media that is created to be satirical, truthful, humorous, offensive, honest, or abusive without being derisive towards those who posted the material or those featured in the material. This can be difficult at times. But remember, this is University level coursework. Be professional.

This is not to say we cannot or will not discuss topics, or that everyone must agree. But we will only engage in respectful conversations in online and in-class discussions and assignments. Please help to make this classroom a safe space for everyone. Sexism, racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, religious prejudices, white supremacy, hate speech, etc. will not be tolerated. The material we cover in class may engage in these behaviors and discourses, but members of this class will not.

**Schedule**

This schedule is a tentative plan for the course and subject to change at my discretion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tues Jan 7th</td>
<td>What does a Digital Media Studies Class <em>do</em>?</td>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thurs Jan 9th</td>
<td>Ethics in Digital Studies</td>
<td>Dorey, “‘Proof My Life is an Anime’—Yes, I’m the Toast Person”</td>
<td>--Discussion Board Due by 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tues Jan 14th</td>
<td>What is New Media?</td>
<td>Ch 1 “Introduction to New Media” pp. 1-30. (30 pages)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thurs Jan 16th</td>
<td>Affordances and Constraints</td>
<td>Morrison, “Facebook and Coaxed Affordances” (LEARN)</td>
<td>--Discussion Board Due by 11:59pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tues Jan 21st</td>
<td>What Makes New Media “New”?</td>
<td>Ch 2 “The History of New Media” pp. 34-62. (28 pages)</td>
<td>--Chapter 2 Group Presentation Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thurs Jan 23rd</td>
<td>The Digital Self and Positionality</td>
<td>Bourke, “Positionality: Reflecting on the Research Process” (LEARN)</td>
<td>--Discussion Board Due by 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tues Jan 28th</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Studies 101</td>
<td>Ch 3 “Approaches to New Media” pp. 67-91. (24 pages)</td>
<td>--Chapter 3 Group Presentation Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading/Assignment</td>
<td>Discussion Board Due</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Thurs Jan 30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Online Versus Offline</td>
<td>Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” and Cascio, “Get Smarter”</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Tues Feb 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Our Phones/Our Lives</td>
<td>Ch 4 “Mobile New Media” pp. 94-125. (31 pages)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Thurs Feb 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>The Costs of a Cell Phone</td>
<td>Reading: Belkhir and Elmeligi, “Assessing ICT Global Emissions Footprint: Trends to 2040 &amp; Recommendations” (LEARN)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Tues Feb 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Sticky, Spreadable, and Viral: Network Theory Sounds Gross</td>
<td>Ch 5 “Social Networks and Participatory Culture” pp. 128-163. (35 pages)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Thurs Feb 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>😊😊😊</td>
<td>Sternbergh, “Smile, You’re Speaking Emoji: The Rapid Evolution of a Wordless Tongue” and glance over current/live version now</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Tues Feb 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Thurs Feb 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Tues Feb 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Digital Storytelling</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Thurs Feb 27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>In-Class Work on Creative Project</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tues Mar 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>The Games Industry</td>
<td>Ch 6 “Games: Technology, Industry, and Culture” pp. 167-192. (25 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Thurs Mar 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Critical Play and Games</td>
<td>Flanagan and Nissenbaum, “Uncovering Values in Games” (LEARN)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Tues Mar 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Gamification, Playbour &amp; the Labour of Fun</td>
<td>Ch 7 “Creative Industries” pp. 196-223. (27 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Thurs Mar 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Fan Labour Outside the Mainstream</td>
<td>Stanfill and Condis, “Fandom and/as Labor”</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Tues Mar 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>What Happens When Information, Knowledge, and Memes Spread the Same Ways?</td>
<td>Ch 8 “The Global Knowledge Economy” pp. 226-256. (30 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Reading/Assignments</td>
<td>Due Times</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Thurs Mar 19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Influences on Influencers</td>
<td>Postigo, “The Socio-Technical Architecture of Digital Labor: Converting Play into YouTube Money” (LEARN)</td>
<td>--Creative Project Due by 11:59PM --Discussion Board Due by 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tues Mar 24&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>What Happened to Napster?: Creative Commons, Copyright, and Open Access</td>
<td>Ch 9 “Internet Law, Policy, and Governance” pp. 260-295. (35 pages)</td>
<td>--Chapter 9 Group Presentation Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Thurs Mar 26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Your Data: Surveilled or Shared?</td>
<td>Zoder, “How Much is Your Data Worth?”</td>
<td>--Discussion Board Due by 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Tues Mar 31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Digital Futures</td>
<td>Ch 10, “Conclusion” pp. 299-311. (12 pages)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Thurs Apr 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“Can you repeat the part of the stuff where you said all about the things?”/: Review and Wrap-Up</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>--Discussion Board Due by 11:59pm --Complete Evaluations before leaving class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>--Response Essay due by 11:59PM --All late work due by 11:59PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>