Course Description and Objectives
This course provides an introduction to the growing field of digital media studies, with a triple focus on theory, interpretation, and practice. We will engage with the central critical conversations and debates in the digital humanities to examine a wide variety of new media objects and texts ranging from cyberpunk and hypertext fiction to contemporary videogames and augmented reality. Students will also participate in a series of lab workshops during which they will learn the creative skills and tools required to design and build their own digital artifacts, leading up to a cumulative applied project. No programming experience required.

Evaluation
- Four Blog Responses (200-400 words each) (20%)
- Digital Creative Writing Assignment: Due Nov. 1 (20%)
- Cumulative Group Design Project: Due Dec. 2 (20%)
- Final Essay (8-10 pages): Due Dec. 2 (20%)
- Attendance and Participation (20%)

Required Texts
- The Wachowski Brothers’ The Matrix (1999)
- Telltale Games’ The Walking Dead (2011) (available for PC, Mac, PS3, Xbox 360, and iOS)
- The majority of course readings will be posted on LEARN or freely available online, as indicated in the weekly schedule.

Expectations for Attendance and Participation
You will note that attendance and participation are worth 20% of your final grade, equal to any of the assignments. Students will be allowed three absences. Additional absences will impact the final grade. If you’re going to be absent due to unforeseen circumstances, please email me before class to let me know you will not be attending and why.

In addition to attending class on a regular basis, students will be expected to participate actively in all class discussions, applied workshops and group assignments. In order to contribute to the best of your ability and earn a high participation grade, you must complete scheduled readings, interactive texts, games, etc. before class.

A Note about Technology in the Classroom
Since this is a digital media course, students are highly encouraged to bring laptops or tablet computers to class; we will be using them on a regular basis. However, students who abuse this privilege by spending class time on websites, social networks, games, etc. unrelated to the weekly topic will be asked to turn off their computers and may be docked participation marks.

Assignments
Four Blog Responses (200-400 words each) (20%)
Students will complete four blog responses over the course of the semester and post them to the course WordPress site (https://uwenglish293.wordpress.com/). Blog postings should reflect on the previous week’s assigned readings, discussions, and/or workshops. Students are not permitted to write more than one blog response per week. All four blog entries must be posted to the course website by November 25th.

Digital Creative Writing Assignment: Due Nov. 1 (20%)
This assignment is a creative exercise in composing text-based, interactive narratives. We will spend Weeks 3 and 4 experimenting with hypertext fiction, electronic literature, and text-based games, as well as at least two contemporary authoring tools. Students will pick one of these authoring tools to create their own short stories, to be accompanied by a short essay or artist’s statement (2-3 pages) explaining why they made the creative choices they did. Students will be graded on writing quality, creativity, and an understanding of the stylistic conventions and affordances specific to the chosen platform.

Cumulative Group Design Project (20%)
In this cumulative applied project, students will work in groups to design a new media object that demonstrates their knowledge of course readings and discussions throughout the semester. While some projects will remain at the conceptual design document stage, students are welcome to implement their designs as working prototypes, using any tools or technical skills learned in class and/or elsewhere. Please remember that this assignment is not a test of technological proficiency, but of theoretical, interpretive, and practical knowledge gained in the course. All groups will have the opportunity to share their projects informally on the last day of class. Groups must consult with me on their ideas before November 18th.

Final Essay (8-10 pages) (20%)
In the final essay, students will provide a description and theorization of their group’s project. Although the applied project is a group effort, students must submit individual essays featuring
their own theoretical approach to the project. The essay must contain references to at least 3 course readings. Essays will be graded on clarity and thoroughness of the project's description, critical use of course readings, as well as technics (spelling, grammar, formatting, etc.). Students are highly encouraged to consult with me during my office hours or over email before the due date.

**Formatting and Citation**
Papers should be typed/printed double-spaced on 8 ½ x 11” white paper. Please ensure a 1” margin on all sides of the page and use a 12 pt Times New Roman font or equivalent. Please use MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation style. Emailing of papers is prohibited, unless one is given express permission of the instructor. Please remember to keep backup copies.

**Deadlines and Late Policy**
All assignments are to be handed in at the beginning of class on the scheduled date. If you cannot attend class on a due date, please do not slip essays under my office door; you can submit them to the English Department dropbox. 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. Exceptions will only be made in extreme circumstances and/or with a doctor’s note.

**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.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, 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 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, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.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, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm)

**Appeals:** A student 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](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):** [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (UW):** [http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/)

**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.

**Schedule**
This syllabus is a tentative plan for the course, and subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.

**Week 1: Introduction to Digital Media Studies**
- **Sept 9.** Intro to course, syllabus and assignments
- **Sept. 11.** Intro to digital media studies (no readings)
- **Sept. 13.** Kirschenbaum: “What Is Digital Humanities and What’s It Doing in English Departments?”

**Week 2: Remediation: The Medium is the Message**
- **Sept. 16.** McLuhan: “The Medium is the Message” (LEARN)
- **Sept. 18.** Bolter and Grusin: “Immediacy, Hypermediacy, and Remediation” (LEARN)
- **Sept. 20.** Hayles: “Print Is Flat, Code Is Deep: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis” (LEARN)

**Week 3: Hypertext and Electronic Literature: The End of Books?**
- **Sept. 23.** Coover: “The End of Books”; Joyce: *Twelve Blue*
- **Sept. 25.** browse: Electronic Literature Collection
- **Sept. 27.** play: *Howling Dogs* (Twine workshop)

**Week 4: Text Games and Interactive Fiction**
- **Sept. 30.** Montfort: “The Pleasure of the Text Adventure” (LEARN); play: *ZORK* (Parsely workshop)
- **Oct. 2.** play: *Save Merlin the Pig! A rescue quest of dubious proportions* (Inklewriter workshop)
- **Oct. 4.** *instructor at conference -- class cancelled* (start reading *Neuromancer*)

**Week 5: Cyberspace / Cyberpunk**
- **Oct. 7.** Post/transhumanism (no readings)
- **Oct. 9.** Gibson: *Neuromancer* (entire book)
- **Oct. 11.** *Neuromancer; The Matrix* (watch film before class)

**Week 6: Virtual Lives**
- **Oct. 14.** *Thanksgiving Monday -- no class*
- **Oct. 16.** Turkle: “Aspects of the Self” (LEARN)
- **Oct. 18.** Nakamura: “Head-Hunting on the Internet: Identity Tourism, Avatars, and Racial Passing in Textual and Graphic Chat Spaces” (LEARN)
Week 7: Online Communities

Week 8: Videogames and Narrative
Oct. 28. Laurel: “The Nature of the Beast” (LEARN); play: Façade
Oct. 30. Murray: “From Game-Story to Cyberdrama”

Nov 1. (**digital creative writing assignments due**) play: The Walking Dead episodes 1-2

Week 9: Procedural Rhetoric and Persuasive Games
Nov. 4. Bogost: “Procedural Rhetoric” (pp. 28-64) (LEARN); play: McDonald’s Videogame and Airport Security
Nov. 6. Wark: “Allegory (on The Sims)” (LEARN)
Nov. 8. Flanagan: “Critical Computer Games” (LEARN); play: September 12th: a toy world
(Grow-a-Game workshop)

Week 10: Locative Media and Augmented Reality
Nov. 11. Hemment: “Locative Arts” (LEARN) and “The Locative Dystopia” (LEARN)
(StoryTrek workshop)
Nov. 15. ARIS workshop (no readings)

Week 11: Hacktivism and Tactical Media
Nov. 18. Jordan: “Hacktivism: All Together in the Virtual” (LEARN)
Nov. 20. Anonymous and WikiLeaks (no readings)
Nov. 22. Raley: “Tactical Media as Virtuosic Performance” (LEARN)

Week 12: Alternate Reality Games and Netprov
Nov. 25. (**last day to submit blog entries**) McGonigal: “The Puppet Master Problem: Design for Real-World, Mission Based Gaming”
Nov. 27. Wittig and Marino: “Netprov - Networked Improv Literature” and “Occupying MLA”
Nov. 29. Case study: Bonfire of the Humanities (web content: links to be posted on LEARN)

Week 13. Wrap-Up
Dec. 2. (**final projects and papers due**) Informal Presentation Day (no readings)