

## Story-Telling for New Media

ATEC 4346

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TR 10:00-11:15 ATEC 1.104

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Office Hours: TR1:30-2:30

### Course Description:

With the rise of digital literacy, what was once marginal “geek” culture has come to dominate the social landscape. While storytelling used to take place via a relatively narrow set of channels, born digital narratives are now opening up new structural possibilities (hypertext, blog fiction, YouTube shows, digital games). Criticism has ranged from outright dismissal (“nothing has changed”) to hyperbolic (“nothing will ever be the same”). Regardless of where one takes up position along this spectrum, the now ubiquitous potential of the digital text raises two crucial questions: What/How much changes in the digital text? And perhaps more importantly, how does this move to the digital text affect us as readers? In class we will ask these questions (along with a host of others) of a variety of narrative forms. In order to adequately address these issues, we will read creative works from a variety of genres (novels, hypertext, digital games, web fiction), while supplementing our approach through the reading of critical texts.

### Required Texts:

The following are available at the Off-Campus Books.

*Patchwork Girl*, Shelly Jackson, Eastgate Systems ISBN 1884511236

*Lolita*, Vladimir Nabokov ISBN 0679727299

*First Person, New Media as Story Performance and Game* ISBN 0262731754

Not available at bookstore (i.e. you will need to obtain on your own).

*Grand Theft Auto, San Andreas* (Rockstar)

In addition there will be texts available online or via eReserve, which you will need to print out and bring to class.

### Course Website:

The course website for this class can be found at <http://www.outsidethetext.com/trace>. You should get in the habit of checking this regularly as I will post suggestions and thoughts about the readings here, as well as links to other things that might interest the class. The syllabus can be found here as well, and any changes to the syllabus will be posted here. If you forget the web address you can always find it from <http://www.outsidethetext.com>, an easier url to remember.

### Course Requirements:

Weekly Writing Assignments (20%): Throughout the semester I will give short weekly writing assignments. At times these will be a matter of posting your thoughts on the readings to the

course blog, other weeks this will require you to turn in a one to two page response to the texts we are discussing.

Attendance and Participation (20%): This is a crucial part of class. Students are expected to come to class on time, prepared, having completed the assigned reading and writing, and ready to contribute their thoughts to class discussions, to listen seriously and respectfully to the thoughts of others, and to participate in all in-class group work and writing activities. I strongly urge you to attend every class, as most of the work done in class is necessary for successful completion of the course. Only three absences are permitted, and these should be used for illness or emergencies (i.e. this does not mean three absences plus absences for illness etc.). Missing more than three classes will affect your grade. More than five absences will result in failing the course. If you need to miss class for religious reasons, please speak to me ahead of time. Absences for religious purposes do not count against the permitted number (as long as prior notification is given). Lateness is also unacceptable; if you arrive late to class you will be marked as absent.

Class Wiki (30%): One of the central tenets of this class is that contrary to our assumptions about writing, authorship is actually a collective process not an individual endeavor. (While I would make this argument for older narrative forms, it is certainly true of contemporary digital networked media.) Thus, one of the requirements of this course is to not only understand this new collaborative literacy, but to partake in it as well. We will be producing a class wiki which covers the content of this course. The entire class will be responsible for contributing to this project. At times this will entail working in groups, at times on your own, but always with a sense of producing an overall collaborative piece. Each of you will be required to contribute new entries as well as serve as an editor for the work of others. Your grade for this project will be partially determined by your individual effort and partly on the overall quality of the site. I will cover the details in class, but think of this as a Wikipedia with a critical perspective on digital narrative.

Final Project (30%): You will have a choice of producing a critical or creative piece for your final project. This will entail producing several drafts of your chosen project throughout the second half of the semester. Critical projects will need to be 8-10 pages, while creative ones will need to be significant digital narratives (produced for this class) accompanied by process notes that help to contextualize your work in terms of the issues we have discussed in class. More details of this assignment will be given after midterm.

Grading: As per the undergraduate catalog students will be graded on a range of A-F.

### **A Note on Technology:**

Because at its core this class is about how technology changes narrative and more broadly our sense of self and culture, we will necessarily engage with a range of computer tools and web based applications. You do not need any prior skill, however, merely a willingness to engage and learn. I am more than willing to take extra time; all you need to do is ask.

A majority of the tools we will be using in class are web-based, thus you will not need any special software (except for the final weeks of class when we will be covering Digital Games).

You do however need an up-to-date version of Firefox (a free web browser) as well as current versions of various plugins (for example flash, and a video player). Don't worry though, we will cover this in class. You should have an email address that you check regularly for this class.

One further note about technology. As much as technology makes life easier, at times it can also be difficult (computer crashes, deleted work, unavailable internet connections, etc). Plan accordingly: "the computer ate my homework" or "the internet was down" are not reasons to forgo doing the assigned work. It is in your best interest to leave extra time, especially at first, to ensure that technology does not get in the way of your class work.

### **How to Reach Me:**

The best way to reach me though is by email <dparry@utdallas.edu> or you can find me online at <<http://www.outsidethetext.com>>. I check email frequently throughout the day. If you email me and do not receive a response within 48 hours (usually I will get back to you within a day), please feel free to email me again (I might not have received your first one) and give me a reminder. I promise not to consider this harassing.

My office hours are 1:30-2:30 on Tuesday and Thursday. I am always happy to meet with graduate students, so if these times don't work please email me and we can find another time. My office is ATEC 1.502.

### **A Final Note:**

Should any aspect of class confuse/concern/trouble you, or if you have questions about any of this, please see me.

## Storytelling for New Media

### Week One

Tuesday, Jan. 8th

- Class Introduction

Thursday, Jan. 10th

- *KateModern* <<http://bebo.com/katemodern>>

### Week Two

Tuesday, Jan. 15th

- *KateModern* <<http://bebo.com/katemodern>>

Thursday, Jan. 17th

- *Lolita* (to Chp. 24—Part One)

### Week Three

Tuesday, Jan. 22nd

- *Lolita* (to Chp. 17—Part Two)

Thursday, Jan. 24th

- *Lolita* (to end)

### Week Four

Tuesday, Jan 29th

- Aarseth, "Nonlinearity and Literary Theory" (eReserve)

Thursday, Jan 31st

- Ryan, "Immersion to Interactivity" (eReserve)

### Week Five

Tuesday, Feb. 5th

- *Remediation*

Thursday, Feb. 7th

- Joyce, "*Notes Towards an Unwritten*" (online); Derrida, "*Book to Come*" (eReserve)

### Week Six

Tuesday, Feb. 12th

- *Patchwork Girl*

Thursday, Feb. 14th

- *Patchwork Girl*

### Week Seven

Tuesday, Feb. 19th

- Douglas and Hargadon, "The Pleasure of Immersion and Interaction" (*First Person*)

Thursday, Feb. 21st

- Joyce, *Twelve Blue* <[http://www.eastgate.com/TwelveBlue/Twelve\\_Blue.html](http://www.eastgate.com/TwelveBlue/Twelve_Blue.html)>

### Week Eight

Tuesday, Feb. 26th

- *Implementation* <<http://nickm.com/implementation/>>

Thursday, Feb 28th

- *Inanimate Alice* <<http://www.inanimatealice.com/>>

### Week Nine

Tuesday, March 4th

- *A Million Penguins* <<http://www.amillionpenguins.com>>

Thursday, March 6th

- *Four Eyed Monsters* <<http://foureyedmonsters.com/>>

### Week Ten

Tuesday, March 18th

- *Forget the Rules* <<http://www.forgettherules.com/>>

Thursday, March 20th

- ARGS

### Week Eleven

Tuesday, March 25th

- ARGS

Thursday, March 27th

- Jenkins, "Game Design as Narrative Architecture"; Eskelinen, "Towards Computer Game Studies" (Both in *First Person*)

## **Week Twelve**

Tuesday, April 1st

- Zimmerman, "Narrative, Interactivity, Play, and Games"; Moulthrop, "From Work to Play" (Both in *First Person*)

Thursday, April 3rd

- *Grand Theft Auto*

## **Week Thirteen**

Tuesday, April 8th

- *Grand Theft Auto*

Thursday, April 10th

- Penny, "Representation, Enaction, and the Ethics of Simulation" (*First Person*)  
Chess, "Playing the Bad Guy" (Reader)

## **Week Fourteen**

Tuesday, April 15th

- *Facade*

Thursday, April 17th

- Student Projects

## **Week Fifteen**

Tuesday, April 22nd

- Student Projects

Thursday, April 24th

- Final Class