

Writing for New Media: Writing the Networked Archive

ATEC 6351

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T 7:00-9:45 ATEC 1.104

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Office Number: TBA

Office Hours: T1:30-2:30, R10:15-11:15

Course Description:

In the introduction to *Smart Mobs*, Howard Rheingold argues that in the future people will be divided between “those who know how to use new media to band together [and] those who don’t” (xix). In this class we will examine how the technological change from the analog to the digital affects the ability to produce and disseminate knowledge and how networked media are changing society. Once powerful institutions seem to be losing relevance by the day (consider how quickly Wikipedia has trumped Britannica). At the same time we should not too quickly view these new networked digital spaces as utopian democracies, for there are still substantial rhetorical and cultural forces at work. While focusing on the practice of writing (blog, wikis), we will at the same time question what it means to “write” (should podcasts, Youtube, and Twitter count as writing?). Central to our examination will be how technology, rhetoric, and ethics shape our use of networked communication. We will divide our time between engaging theoretical questions and using new technologies of knowledge creation and dissemination. (No prior technical skills required.)

Required Texts:

(all texts are available at Off-Campus Books and the campus bookstore)

-*Hypertext 3.0*, George Landow

-*Paper Machines*, Jacques Derrida

-*Uses of Blogs*, ed. Axel Bruns & Joanne Jacobs

-*Remediation*, Jay David Bolter & Richard Grusin

-*New Media, Old Media*, ed. Wendy Chun & Thomas Keenan

-*Question Concerning Technology*, Martin Heidegger

-*My Mother was a Computer*, Katherine Hayles

-*Unit Operations*, Ian Bogost

-Course Packet-available only at Off-Campus Books

Course Requirements:

The primary requirement for this course is class participation. I realize that the reading load for this class is heavy, however, we are going to be covering some complicated and complex issues and it is important to have a shared basis from which class discussions can proceed. Thus for every class it is your responsibility to come to class not only having done the reading, but to have spent time considering the issues that each author raises, ready to engage in a

lively discussion about the questions at hand. Missing more than one class can lead to a lower grade. In addition to attendance and participation the following are required for this class.

Participating in the class blog: There is a website for this class (see below). Every week you will need to make a short post, in the form of a comment, to the class blog. This gives you a chance to comment on the reading before we get to class, to see what others have made of the reading, and provides me with some feedback about how the class has approached the material. I will often use this online forum as a place from which to begin our in class discussion. Thus, you should post your comment by *no later than midnight on the Sunday before class*, and plan on visiting the website sometime on Monday to look over what others have written. These posts need not be long (100-200 words); they just need to give a sense of what you thought of the material and places where you would like to begin the discussion. Think of these as questions rather than a thesis.

Midterm: There will be a short take-home midterm for this class (1500-1800 words) that will ask you to reformulate and synthesize readings from the first half of the semester.

Final Project: I want this assignment to be productive for each of you not just in terms of the class, but also to relate to your overall work as an academic. So, depending on your the degree program in which you are enrolled, and your own goals you can choose from one of three final projects. I will cover these in more detail in class, but here is a rough sketch. After the midterm you will need to give me a one-two page summary of what direction your project is taking so that I can provide feedback.

- Drawing on the writings from throughout the semester produce a study of an existing digital “art” object. This is not an artistic review, but rather a way of using a work to interrogate, complicate, and explore further the theories we discussed in class. (4500-5000 words)
- Produce a creative work. What I will accept here is fairly broad, I am even open to group projects, I just need a clear sense of the project after the midterm (it probably needs to have “text” as a focus given the focus of this class). However, in addition to the work you will need to write process notes for your work (if you have a group project each participant will need to write his or her own paper). This is not an artist statement but rather a shorter version of option #1, placing the choices you made in creation of the work in conversation with the class readings (2000-2500 words). (Note: If you choose this option the work needs to be specifically for this class—no fair recycling past work.)
- A “traditional” scholarly essay. You can write an academic essay that addresses any of the issues that we have covered in class. As with the above what I will accept here is fairly broad, you just need to submit an outline to me for feedback after the midterm. (4500-5000 words)

Course Website:

The course website for this class can we found at <<http://www.outsidethetext.com/arche>>. 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.

How to Reach Me:

This is not as tricky as it might sound. Right now I do not have an office number or a phone extension. (My office will not be ready until Sep. 1). For the time being I am borrowing Dean Terry's office (ATEC 1.602) so you can try and find me there. 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 Tuesday 1:30-2:30 and Thursday 10:15-11:15. 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.

Schedule of Readings

Week One: Aug 22nd

- Class Introduction

Textuality from Script to Hypertext

Week Two: Aug 29

- Saussure "Course in General Linguistics" (Handout)
- Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context" (Handout)
 - Other Texts to Consider:
 - Plato, *Phaedrus*
 - Derrida, "The Double Session" *Dissemination*
 - Ong, *Orality and Literacy*

Week Three: Sep 5th

- Landow, *Hypertext 3.0* (Focus on Intro., Chps 1-4)
- Foucault, "What is an Author" (Course Packet)
 - Other Texts to Consider:
 - Aarseth, *Cybertexts: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*
 - Barthes, "Death of the Author"
 - Landow, *Hyper/Text/Theory*

Week Four: Sep 12th

- Derrida, *Paper Machine*: "Machines and the 'Undocumented Person'," "The Book to Come," "The Word Processor" & "Paper or Me, You Know . . ."
 - Other Texts to Consider:
 - Birkets, *The Gutenberg Elegies*
 - Coover, "The End of Books"

Week Five: Sep 19th

- Bolter & Grusin, *Remediation* (Intro, Section I (Theory) & III (Self))
 - Other Texts to Consider:
 - McLuhan, *Understanding Media the Extensions of Man*
 - Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*
 - Manovich, *The Language of New Media*

The Technological Human

Week Six: Sep 26th

- Heidegger, *Question Concerning Technology*
 - Other Texts to Consider:
 - Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*
 - Weber, *Mass Mediauras*
 - Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*

Week Seven: Oct 3rd

- Hayles, *My Mother was a Computer* (Part I & II)
 - Other Texts to Consider:
 - Mackenzie, *Cutting Code: Software and Sociality*

Midterm will be handed out this week, and do the following week in class.

Week Eight: Oct 10th

- Hayles, *My Mother was a Computer* (Part III)
 - Other Texts to Consider:
 - Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media*

Week Nine: Oct 17th

- Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (course packet)
- Nichols, "The Work of Culture in the Age of Cybernetic Systems" (course packet)
- Miles, "A Vision for Genuine Rich Media Blogging," *Uses of Blogs*
 - Other Texts to Consider:
 - Weber, *Targets of Opportunity*

The Networked Society

Week Ten: Oct 24th

- Habermas, "Political Communication in Media Society" (online)
- Burns, "Habermas and/or against the Internet" Response to Habermas (online)
- Hartley, "The Frequencies of Public Writing" (course packet)
- Burns, "The Practice of News Blogging" *Uses of Blogs*
- Singer, "Journalists and News Bloggers: Complements, Contradictions, and Challenges" *Uses of Blogs*
 - Other Texts to Consider:

Lovink, *Dark Fiber*

Poster, *What's the Matter with the Internet*

Rheingold, *Smart Mobs*

Week Eleven: Oct 31st

- Chun and Keenan, *new media, old media*

Final Project Proposals Due

Week Twelve: Nov 7th

- Chun and Keenan, *new media, old media*

Week Thirteen: Nov 14th

- Bogost, *Unit Operations*

Other Texts to Consider:

Wardrup-Fruin & Harrigan, *First Person*

Wardrup-Fruin & Harrigan, *Second Person*

Week Fourteen: Nov 21st