After/Print

EMAC 6361-Writing for Interactive Media

EMAC 6361

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W 7:00-9:45 ATEC 1.606

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Office Hours: T 11:15-12:15, W 4:00-5:00

& by appointment

Course Description:

For roughly 400 years, a period me might refer to as the Gutenberg Parentheses, analog print has served as the primary substrate for knowledge creation, archivization, and dissemination. This, to state the obvious is no longer the case, a vast majority of the information produced this year will never see an analog format, instead existing only in the digital network. This class will focus on understanding what happens as we move from a culture whose primary means of knowledge organization is analog print to one which is digitally networked. The class will be divided into three sections. In the first we will look at the broad theoretical questions which inform this change. In the second we will look at how specific knowledge and cultural institutions (libraries, journalism, higher education, entertainment) have been affected and examine the approaches/experiments that have already been taken. In the final portion of the class students will work in groups to produce projects and propose alternative approaches and solutions.

Required Texts:

(all texts are available at Off-Campus Books)

> *The Nature of the Book* by Adrain Johns
>
> *The Future of the Book* by Geoffrey Nunberg
>
> *Remediation* by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin
>
> *Wealth of Networks* by Yochai Benkler (You can download this book for free.)
>
> *Glut: Mastering Information Through the Ages* by Alex Wright
>
> *Everything is Miscellaneous* by David Weinberger
>
> *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in a Hybrid Economy* by Lawrence Lessig
>
> *Paper Machine* by Jacques Derrida (We will only be reading two articles from this book, so you will be able to get it off eReserve. But regardless it is a good book and if you have a chance pick up a copy.)
>
> *Rip: A Remix Manifesto* (Documentary available online.)

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation (25%): The primary requirement for this course is class participation. To do well in this course you will need to come to class having done the reading for the week prepared to discuss the text at hand. I realize that the reading load for this class is heavy at times, however, we are going to be covering some complex and complicated issues and in order for the class discussion to proceed and for everyone to benefit the most from our

time in class it is necessary for every student 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 text raises, ready to engage in a lively discussion about the questions at hand. Missing more than one class can lead to a lower grade.

Group Blog (15%): Each group will have a blog, whose thematic focus will center around the group's "institution," to which members of the group will be required to post throughout the course of the semester, reflecting on the readings, the way they relate to their specific project, and commenting on the development of their final piece. Usually this will take the form short 250-350 word reflections on the reading.

Investigative Histories (25%): Each group will be responsible for one week of class (weeks eight through twelve). For these weeks the groups will be responsible for co-ordinating readings, providing an initial presentation on the subject matter, and fostering the discussion for the class. (See "Project Guidelines" for more information.)

Final Projects (35%): Each group will be responsible for conceiving of how one "knowledge institution" will be changed/can change with the switch from analog to digital. The last three weeks of the course will be dedicated to each group presenting their project followed by time for discussion. The components of these projects can vary widely depending on the angle the particular group takes. More information about this will be presented during the first few weeks of class. (See "Project Guidelines" for more information.)

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:

The best way to reach me 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 11:15-12:15 and Wednesday 4:00-5:00 (or by appointment—I am frequently on campus outside these hours). My office is ATEC 1.502.

Schedule of Readings

From Analog to Digital

Week One: January 13th

- Intro: Gutenberg Parenthesis

Week Two: January 20th

- *The Nature of the Book* by Adrian Johns

Week Three: January 27th

- Readings from *The Future of the Book* (Nunberg), and *Paper Machine* (Derrida)

Week Four: February 3rd

- *Remediation* by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin

Week Five: February 10th

- *Glut: Mastering Information Through the Ages* by Alex Wright
- *Everything is Miscellaneous* by David Weinberger

Week Six: February 17th

- *Wealth of Networks* by Yochai Benkler

Week Seven: February 24th

- *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in A Hybrid Economy* by Lawrence Lessig
- *Rip: A Remix Manifesto* (documentary)

Investigative Histories

Week Eight: March 3rd

- Group One

Week Nine: March 10th

- Group Two

Spring Break

Week Ten: March 24th

- Group Three

Week Eleven: March 31st

- Group Four

Week Twelve: April 7th

- Group Five

Producing the Future

Week Thirteen: April 14th

- Group One/Two Presentation

Week Fourteen: April 21st

- Group Three/Four Presentation

Week Fifteen: April 28th

- Group Five

Project Guidelines

In weeks eight through twelve the class will turn from its broad theoretical overview of the Gutenberg Parenthesis to focusing on the history of specific knowledge institutions (each week we will cover a different one, see the class blog for an updated syllabus/order). During these week student groups will be responsible for coordinating these investigations. Each class period will be divided into two sections, the first a discussion/history of that particular institution during the Gutenberg Parenthesis, and the second a discussion/elaboration into how said institution has attempted to update itself in the digital age. Groups are responsible for supplying the reading for their respective weeks as well as arriving at class with two short presentations (one for each half) which should help to initiate class discussion.

Readings:

For class you should assign 4-5 hours of "reading." Reading here is in quotes because not everything you assign needs to be text. You could for instance assign a recorded lecture, a short documentary, or a website. But, a substantial portion of the reading should be scholarly articles with a critical perspective on these questions. You want the readings to address not only the history of said institution, but also the ideas that have informed that history. Your group could also choose to divide the readings in interesting ways, having some shared readings (which everyone would cover) and some distributed ones (half the class looking at one thing, with the other half another).

Class Discussion/Presentation:

Each group should come to class prepared to frame the discussion for the day. This should take the form of a very short presentation (think three to five minutes). Which highlight the central questions/issues for the day.

Timeline:

- Now: Start reading/researching on your topic.
- Three weeks prior to class session: Email me a working list of the readings for feedback.
- One week prior to class session: Post and make available, a list of readings for the week.

Part Two: Final Projects

In the final three weeks of class each group will have half of class to present their creative vision of a future possibility of their institution. In one sense these visions should be informed by the investigative history your group has done, but in another you want to be bold, creative, and experimental, to think beyond what has been done, past the history of these institutions. Begin by asking yourself what is it that these institutions do, how can it be enhanced by the digital, and how does that conflict with the digital. These creative projects can take a variety of forms, depending on your specific institution. I am not expecting you to fully build anything (building a library could take some time), instead think of this as a proof of concept along with a vision statement. At the same time you want to do more than tell us

what your vision is you want to **show** us. This means for example if you are doing the library you might want to have building sketches (if indeed it involves a building), or a website mock-up if that is important. Consider making a short video if that would help. For your in class presentation, again you want to do more than just tell the class what you imagine, rather you want to show them. Your presentation should **tell a story** not only about what you invision, but why and how this will be accomplished, along with problems and concerns. Each presentation should last 20-30 minutes leaving substantial time for discussion.

As part of each project each group will need to write a ten page paper (one paper per group, not one per person) which contextualizes the project, think of this as the written form of the presentation. Each individual will need to write a one page synopsis of what his or her individual contribution to the project was.

Finally, all projects are required to be public. That is you should host the pieces of the project on your group blog, make the paper available to anyone who wants. The goal here is not to show me, or even your classmates something "cool," but rather to push the wider discourse around these institutions and what is possible.

Timeline:

- Three weeks before presentation: Initial outline of your group's idea and sketch of what materials you will be producing.
- Week of Presentation: Completed project along with individual and group write up.