

SPRING 2020

WRITING IN DIGITAL CULTURES

MWF 10:30-11:20

Renee Ann Drouin
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Office: East Hall
415B

Office Hour: Weds
11:30-1:00
and by appointment



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to Writing in Digital Cultures! This course is designed to develop your rhetorical awareness and concepts relating to technology and the cultures that have subsequently risen from it. During this course, we'll cover a wide swath of digital cultures, from the origins of the internet and social media to snapshots of current digital cultures, including Youtubers, fandoms, memes, and Self-Representations.

A central question of this course is how we understand the writing that occurs in these spaces, and if writing is not located, what are the communicative methods? We'll have weekly readings, writings, and conversations to explore these questions, along with a few projects, to develop your awareness and ability to write about these contexts.

GOALS

In completing this course, students will subsequently:

- Develop rhetorical strategies for navigating digital communication
- Track changes and histories in the rhetorical situations of different aspects of digital culture
- Locate and contextualize digital cultures, presenting new knowledge to diverse audiences
- Recognize differences and similarities between written, visual, and verbal communication
- Consider the ethics and users within digital cultures

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are no required textbooks for this course. Instead, students will read various articles and uploaded to our Canvas page under Files or, in the case of web links, located on our course calendar. Readings must be completed prior to class.

Details on which books chapters are located from can be found on the course calendar.

If curious about any of the topics raised in class and looking to do research/further reading, please reach out.

"TRANSPARENCY MAY BE THE MOST DISRUPTIVE AND FAR-REACHING INNOVATION TO COME OUT OF SOCIAL MEDIA," PAUL GILLIN



POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND EXPECTATIONS

Attendance: While our course requires active engagement, I understand illness and family emergencies occur. If missing class, try to inform me (hopefully ahead of time) so we can determine how to best catch you up. Six or more absences will result in a loss of credit for the course. Barring emergency, if you are more than fifteen minutes late to class, you will earn an absence. Numerous late arrivals may result in a loss of participation.

Submissions: Submit work as a word document, google doc that allows me to edit, or as a PDF onto Canvas on the assigned date. Do not submit projects as Pages. Doing so will result in no credit. In creating multimodal projects, we will decide in advance how to upload them. No hard copies are required.

Late Assignments: All work and projects are to be posted on Canvas by the start of class (unless otherwise specified) or they will be considered late. Homework, journals, and your final project cannot be submitted late.

With exception of emergencies, no major assignments can be turned in late without penalty. For each day an assignment is late, I will subtract 4 points from the total score. After 72 hours, I will not accept the assignment, and you will receive an automatic 0 for it. You must complete all major assignments if you wish to pass the course. If concerned about your ability to complete a project on time, please discuss with me in advance of the due date. I am happy to adapt and work with you.

Technology Policy: Use technology respectfully and in a way that does not prevent you from participating. If technology prevents you from being engaged in the course, you may lose participation points.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND EXPECTATIONS



Etiquette: While our opinions may differ, we will conduct ourselves courteously, with empathy, and with understanding of our diverse experiences. Disrespect will not be tolerated. Any number of penalties may result due to improper behavior, such as removal from class if your conduct is deemed harmful to another student. If group discussions suffer due to a collective failure to complete readings, quizzes and extra writing projects will be assigned.

Professor Absence: If I cancel class unexpectedly and cannot find a substitute instructor, check our Canvas page and your emails for alternative assignments and how this will affect plans for the following course. Not checking the Canvas page is no excuse for not having work for the following class.

Professor Communication: Email is the preferred method of contact. If you email me something, I will try to respond within 24 hours, except on weekends. However, if you don't receive my email reply, this means that I did not receive your message and that you should discuss the content of your email with me personally. I will also periodically send out class announcements via Canvas during the semester.

Personal Safety and Comfort: If the subject matter of a specific reading, presentation, or assignment makes you uncomfortable, see me immediately and we can work out alternative arrangements. You must contact me before an assignment is due and not retroactively. Acknowledging online spaces are not always safe, please never feel concerned about reaching out. Your safety and comfort should always be a priority. If ever concerned about your mental health, contact BGSU's Counseling Services at 419-372-2081.

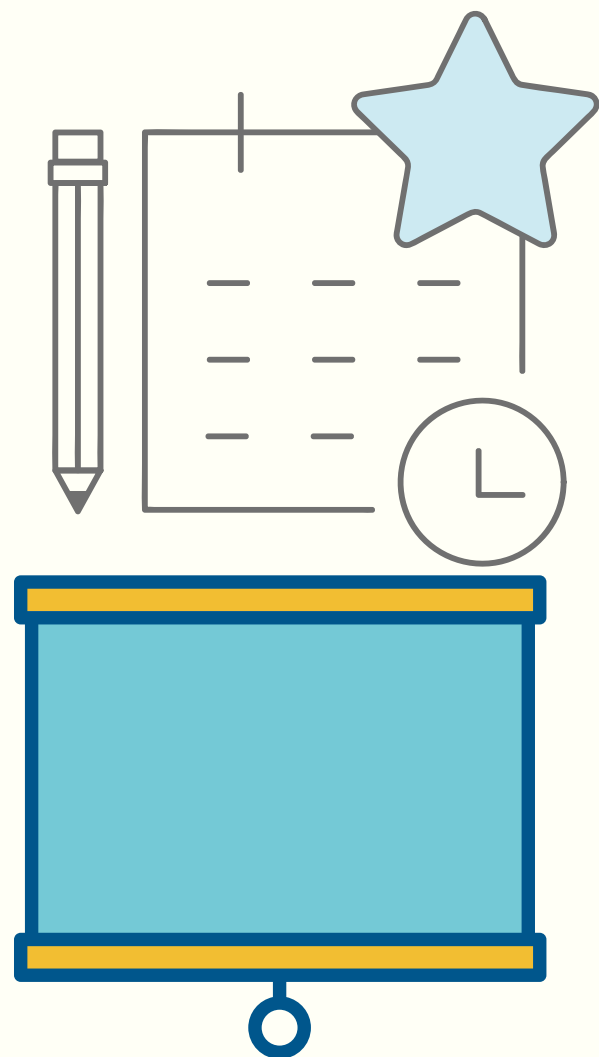
POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND EXPECTATIONS

University Closure Due to Bad Weather:

In most cases, the University will not close for winter conditions unless the Wood County Sheriff's Department declares a Level 3 emergency. Closing information will be communicated through BGSU's AlertBG text system, BGSU e-mail notification, BGSU's website, and Toledo's Television stations. If I elect to cancel class due to weather conditions, I will share this news via Canvas.



Religious Holidays: It is the policy of the University to make every reasonable effort to allow students to observe their religious holidays without academic penalty. In such cases, it is the obligation of the student to provide the instructor with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which he or she will be absent. Should you need to miss a class due to a religious holiday, you should understand that absence from classes for religious reasons does not relieve you of responsibility for completing required work. In such an event, you should consult with me well before you leave for the holiday to find out what assignments will be due while you are absent—and you subsequently should have the assignments completed and turned in to me prior to missing class.



POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND EXPECTATIONS

Academic Honesty: While our class will include peer review, collaboration, and sharing ideas, all writing must be done by you alone. Plagiarism, including buying papers, stealing another student's work, and/or failure to cite sources, is strictly forbidden. Sources used in papers must be properly cited in MLA or APA style citation. All cases of intentional plagiarism will, at the very least, result in a failure of the assignment and will be reported to the school. Please refer to BGSU's current Student Affairs Handbook for information regarding BGSU's academic honesty policies.

Accessibility Statement: If you have a documented disability which requires accommodations to obtain equal access for your learning, please make your needs known to me, preferably during the first week of the semester. Please note that students who request accommodations need to verify their eligibility through the Office of Accessibility Services at <https://www.bgsu.edu/accessibility-services.html>

To ensure accessibility, documents are uploaded as searchable PDFs or Word Documents. When created by me, assignment sheets and short readings will utilize headers, fonts, and other design elements accessible to screen readers and visual impairment. If there are other ways I can better improve and implement accessibility in the classroom, please let me know.

Student Veteran Friendly Campus: BGSU educators recognize student veterans' rights when entering and exiting the university system. If you are a student veteran, please let me know if accommodations need to be made for absences due to drilling or being called to active duty.



ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Weekly Journal Reflections: Over the semester, students will write 6 responses on a topic inspired by the week's readings and discussions. There are 9 times in the semester when a responses is due; decide which weeks interest you or best fit into your schedule. Each piece will be around 1.5-2 pages of writing. Topics include exploring memes and emojis as visual communication, histories of social media, personal connections to digital culture, and the chance to hit upon related topics we may not address in class, such as mobile games/culture, celebrity social media, new online platforms, and defunct ones. Each week will have 2-3 different topics to consider, and I am open to ideas you might have! These projects will be graded on effort; as long as you engage with the topic, you will receive full credit.

Writing extra journals is an option for extra credit on projects. Talk to me in advance to plan and discuss the opportunity.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Your Digital Culture: The first major assignment of the course (3-4 pages) is a reflective piece, asking you to consider what digital cultures you feel connected to or alienated by. Other elements you'll consider include: how you define digital cultures, what have the major cultures of your life been, and what the potential future cultures you'll interact with are, especially in regards to your future careers and/or identity markers.

Rhetorical Analysis of Digital Cultures: For this project (4-5 pages), you will select 2-3 different digital cultures that heavily rely on communication and/or writing. Inspired by the rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, writer, exigency, kairos, etc.), you'll compare and contrast the different cultures, questioning how they reflect their audiences, writing styles, and digital culture.

Presentation and Short Paper: There are an unfathomable number of digital cultures. Naturally, we cannot cover all of them. Luckily, everyone will have time to briefly teach the class about a culture they've discovered. Students will host 5-7 minute presentations and lead an informative, not argument based, presentation on the history, culture, and communication of a digital culture. To conclude the project, you will write a 1-2 page reflection.

Final Project: The final project of the course (6-8 pages) is an argument based paper, created to inspire freedom and flexibility in topics/engagement. Potential topics include arguing over the most influential digital culture, the future of digital cultures, or arguments unique to a singular culture.



Revision: Writing is difficult, and exploring writing within new topics and communities even more so. Sometimes, our best efforts may need additional help, time, and context. You have the option to revise 1 project during the semester. You are required to contact me and meet about your revision within a week of receiving a final grade. Revised projects are due within a week of our conversation. The new grade will replace the old one. You cannot revise incomplete assignments, journal entries, or the final project. You may revise late projects, though you will still face the penalty of lost points due to the delay.

ASSESSMENT

