WRD 408: Digital Composing (Spring 2017)
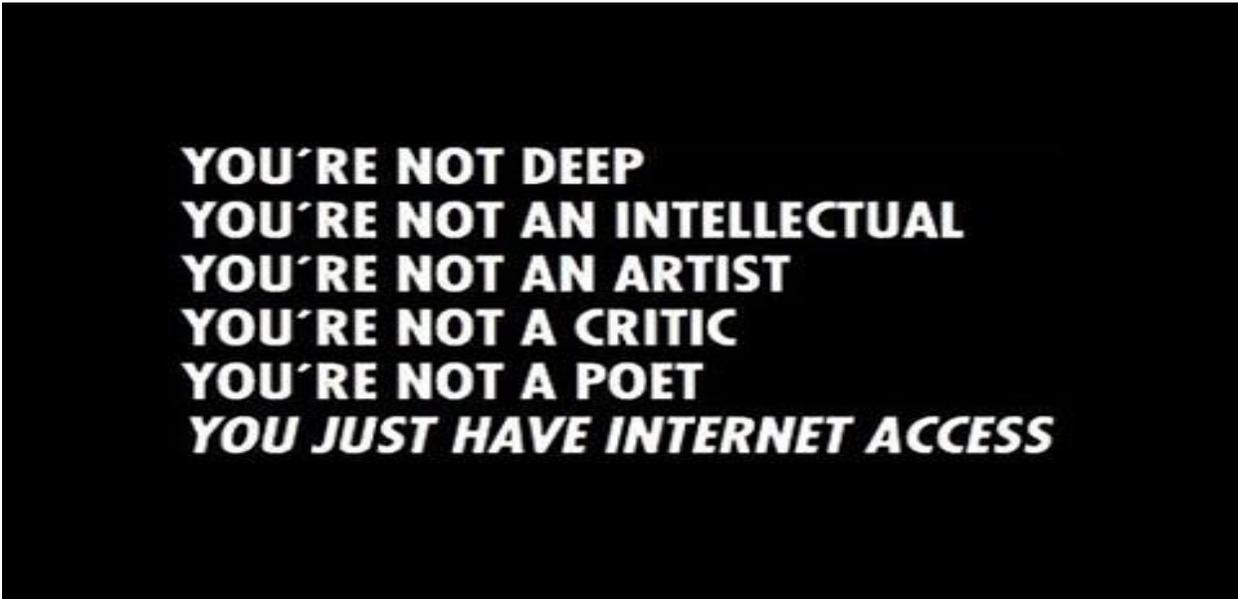
Times, Days, Locations: TuTh 12:30-1:45, CB 207
Instructor: Professor Sharon Yam
Email: s.yam@uky.edu
Office: 1333 Patterson Office Tower
Office Hours: TuTh 1:45-2:45 and by appointment

Course Description

The Internet and digital communication have suffered a bad rep in recent years, yet their impact and influences are undeniable. What exactly makes digital communication so powerful, frustrating, and sometimes infuriating all at the same time? How could we effectively and ethically utilize new media technologies and digital platforms to connect, advocate, and persuade? In this course, we interrogate rhetoric and communication in a digital context, with particular attention to its sociopolitical and cultural consequences and implications. We will explore topics such as digital activism, social media, online communities, and Internet culture and politics. By critically analyzing digital artifacts and discourse, we will be better equipped to produce critical and ethical responses—using new media technologies—to intervene in conversations that matter.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Critically examine and evaluate digital discourse, medium, and artifacts;
- Interrogate the public and political implications of digital communication;
- Understand how gender, sex, race, and class influence communication on digital platforms;
- Conduct research on digital communication using key rhetorical concepts;
- Engage with interdisciplinary scholarship on digital rhetoric, new media studies, and communication;

- Design and produce digital responses that intervene in existing public conversations.

Readings and Materials

The following texts are mandatory for the course; additional readings from other sources are available online:

- Baym, Nancy. *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*. 2nd Edition.
- Markham, Annette and Nancy Baym Eds. *Internet Inquiry: Conversations about Method*.
- Warnick, Barbara and David Heineman. *Rhetoric Online: The Politics of New Media*.

Assignments

Storify

You will trace the hashtag of a particular event (e.g. #NotAllMen, #Gamergate) that has unfolded—or is still unfolding—on social media platforms and create a story based on it. Your story should inform the audience of the rhetorical ecology in which the event takes place, and identify discursive patterns, tension, and power dynamics that are at play.

Digital Ethnography

Building upon the previous assignment, this assignment asks you to expand the scope of your research and analyze the larger discursive landscape on which the event takes place. You will immerse yourself in an online community and conduct both primary and secondary research to form an original argument on an aspect of digital communication. You have the opportunity to revise and submit this assignment after you receive your initial grade and comments.

Final Project

For the final project, you have two options: you could build upon your digital ethnography and remediate it for a different rhetorical situation or you could identify a public issue and design and produce your final project as a response to it. For the first option, the task is to utilize new media technologies to remediate your research paper into a multimedia product that allows you best convey the significance and implications of your research in a new rhetorical situation. For the latter, you will also write a Statement of Goals and Choices to explain the design and writing decisions you make.

Evaluation and Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following weighted components:

Storify: 15%
Digital Ethnography: 30%
Final Portfolio and Presentation: 40%
Class Participation (including Instagram posts): 15%

You will receive written feedback and a letter grade for each assignment according to the university's point system as follows:

A	Exception High Achievement	4.0
A-		3.7
B+		3.3

B	High Achievement	3.0
B-		2.7
C+		2.3
C	Average Achievement	2.0
C-		1.7
D+		1.3
D	Minimum Passing Grade	1.0
D-		.07
E	Failing	
F	Failing (In Pass/Fall Course)	

Course Policies

Participation & Inclusiveness
Your regular attendance and active participation in class is required. In order to contribute constructively to class and group discussions, I expect everyone to have read the assigned reading prior to class and come with questions and responses. This course encourages different perspectives related to gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identities. The course seeks to foster understanding, awareness and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating. We will read about and discuss the experiences of people across a range of identity groups; therefore, maturity, mindfulness and conscientiousness are expected from your language choices and the way you participate in the classroom.

Class Instagram
You are required to make two contributions on Instagram each week. Make sure to use the course hashtag **#WRD408** in all your posts.

Before the first class of every week, you are required to **post an original image with detailed captions and appropriate hashtags that reflect questions, inquiries, and concepts you are grappling with that week**. Your post should reflect on that week's readings in meaningful ways. Here are some suggestions:
-Your post may apply the reading to a new context;
-Your post may offer an additional example of a key concept from the readings;
-Your post may critique or challenge the key argument of the reading;
-Your post may offer an important question the author doesn't answer, and thus a useful question to discuss in class;
-Your post may be a question that you have about the reading, identifying which concept is still fuzzy for you and why.

You also need to **comment on at least one of your peers' post before the beginning of each week's class.** Your comments should be kind, productive, and open: genuinely engage with your peers' ideas without either attacking them or agreeing completely with them all the time. Here are some suggestions on how you could constructively engage:

- You may explain how one of your classmates' posts helped you understand a concept that you didn't understand before;
-You may disagree with one of your classmates' posts;
-You may extend the argument one of your classmates makes, adding additional evidence or ideas;
-You may answer a questioned posed in one of your classmates' posts.

The objective for this weekly assignment is to ensure that we all come to class ready to participate in productive discussions related to the reading materials and to each other's inquiries; it also allows you to practice communicating your ideas discursively and visually via a social media platform, while learning how to most effectively engage with others.

Attendance
You are allowed <u>two absences</u> for whatever reason with no initial penalty. There are times when nearly everyone must miss class for some reason: illness, deadlines, weather, travel, family issues, etc. This policy allows for such absences without penalty, though you should try not to miss class even once! However, each absence after three will drop your final grade a full letter. **Missing more than two weeks of class for whatever reason will result in a failing grade for the course.** Missing a scheduled conference with me or coming to class excessively and frequently late will count as an absence. If your schedule may pose attendance problems, I recommend adding switching to another section.

Late Work
Assignments submitted late will be dropped a full letter grade for each day late. Assignments that are two days late will not be accepted. In-class assignments and activities missed because of absences cannot be made up.

Illnesses and Other Personal Emergencies
If you experience an unavoidable personal situation that prevents you from completing work on time, you must take responsibility for informing me about the situation prior to the date the work is due. We can work through issues you may encounter, but post-facto excuses do not work well.

Religious Holidays
If you plan to miss class for religious holidays, state in writing the days you will be absent and submit that information to your discussion section instructor by the third week of class.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty
The University of Kentucky considers plagiarism a serious violation. Plagiarism is:
- using someone else's words or ideas without proper documentation when quoting and paraphrasing;
- copying some portion of your text from another source without proper acknowledgement;
- borrowing another person's specific ideas without documenting the source;
- turning in a paper written by someone else, an essay "service," or from a World Wide Web site (including reproductions of such essays or papers);
- turning in a paper that you wrote for another course or turning in the same paper for more than one course without getting permission from your instructors first.

The University of Kentucky has established a range of penalties for students who plagiarize, including a reduced grade on a redone assignment, a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, or even suspension or expulsion from the university.

Resources
Writing Center and the Multimodal Communication Lab
The Writing Center, Room B108B in The Hub of the W. T. Young Library (lower level), is available to help you with your writing. It is open 9 AM-9 PM Monday-Thursday, 9 AM-3 PM Friday, and 8 PM-11 PM Sunday. It is strongly advised to make an appointment in advance: go to uky.mywconline.com to sign on as a new client (select "First visit? Click here to register") or to log in and schedule an appointment. More information about the Writing Center is available at: http://wrd.as.uky.edu/writing-center. You can contact the Director of the Writing Center, Judy Prats at: judithgprats@uky.edu. If you have additional problems with public speaking, you may go to the Multimodal Communication Lab in 106 Grehan (859-257-8370). Consider going to either location if you feel stuck at any stage of the communication process. Take advantage of tutoring assistance early, so you have time to get feedback and make changes.

Disability Resource Center
Your success in this class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we may work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. The Disability Resource Center (859-257-2754) provides resources for students with disabilities. You will need to provide documentation of disability to them in order to receive official university services and accommodations.

Please don't hesitate to let me know if you require assistance or accommodations for any reason. I look forward to working with you to meet your learning goals.

Week 1: Introduction

Jan 12: Setting the Agenda

  ➢ **Read**: "Plagiarism Lines Blur for Students in Digital Age" (Gabriel)
  ➢ **Watch**: "Ways of Knowing & Doing in Digital Rhetoric"

Week 2: Understanding New Media Technologies

Jan 17: Background and Context
  ➢ **Read**: "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" (Carr); Baym Ch.2

Jan 19: Digital Media in Use
  ➢ **Read**: *It's Complicated*- P. 8-11, Ch. 7 (Boyd); Baym Ch. 1; "Liquid Love?" (Hobbs et. al.)

Week 3: Digital Media and Rhetoric

Jan 24: What is Digital Rhetoric?
  ➢ **Read**: *Virtualpolitik*-Ch. 2 (Losh); "On Digital Rhetoric" (Eyman) [Optional*: Digital Rhetoric*-Ch. 1 (Eyman)]

Jan 26: Research and Theory
  ➢ **Read**: *Digital Rhetoric*-Ch. 2 (Eyman) and "Print is Flat, Code is Deep" (Hayles)

Week 4: Digital Media and the Publics

Jan 31: The Internet and the Public Sphere
  ➢ **Read**: Warnick and Heineman Ch.1; *The Power of the Internet in China*-Ch. 2 (Yang)

Feb 2: Vernacular Web
  ➢ **Read**: "Electronic Hybridity: The Persistent Processes of the Vernacular Web" (Howard); "Digital Outragicity" (Rice)
  ➢ **Due***: Storify Assignment

Week 5: Social Media and Circulation
Feb 6: Digital Media and Rhetorical Circulation
  ➢ **Read**: Warnick and Heineman Ch. 4; "The Challenges of Defining 'Meme' Culture'" (Miltner); "31 Memes that Defined 2016" (Reinstein)
  ➢ **Listen**: "The Revolution Starts at Noon-Act One: Meme Come True"

Feb 9: Social Media
  ➢ **Read:** Warnick and Heineman Ch. 6; *Participatory Culture, Community, and Play*-Intro (Massanari)

Week 6: Doing Digital Research

Feb 14: Research Method
➢ **Read**: Markham and Baym-P. 1-20, 33-53 [Optional: 20-26, 53-61]

Feb 16: Brainstorming Session
➢ **Read**: Markham and Baym Ch 6
➢ **Homework**: Bring a one-page proposal for your digital ethnography.

Week 7: Online Communities

Feb 21: Digital Networks and Communities
➢ **Read**: Baym Ch. 4, "The Manufactured Intimacy of Online Self-Care" (Koul)

Feb 23: Gender and Internet Culture
➢ **Read**: "Why Women aren't Welcome on the Internet" (Hess); "Gamergate" (Parkin); "Wikipedia's Hostility to Women" (Paling)

Week 8: Identities and Power

Feb 28: Race and Visibility
➢ **Read**: *Cybertypes*-Ch.2 (Nakamura); "There are fewer Pokémon Go Locations in Black Neighborhoods, but why?" (Huffaker)
➢ **Listen**: "Race Swap" (Vogt and Goldman)

Mar 2: Social Class
➢ **Read**: "Internet Access and the High Costs of Being Poor" (Russo); "Pew: 15% of Americans don't Use the Internet" (Rainie); "U.S. Smartphone Use in 2015" (Smith-Intro, Ch. 3)
➢ **Due**: Digital Ethnography

Week 9: Digital Activism

Mar 7: Advantages and Limitations
➢ **Read**: "Small Change" (Gladwell); "Weak Ties, Twitter, and Revolution" (Lehrer); "Hashtag Activism Isn't a Cop-out" (Berlatsky); "20 Tech Issues that will Impact Social Justice in 2017" (Negron)

Mar 9: Visual Rhetoric and Social Movement
➢ **Read**: "Protest Photography in a 'Post-Occupy' World" (Cram, Loehwing, Lucaites); "How Cellphone Cameras Shape OWS" (Holland) ; "Why Photographs Don't Stop the War" (Hariman)

Week 10: Spring Break

Week 11: Brainstorming and Workshop

Mar 21: Brainstorming and Writing/ Individual Conferences
  ➢ **Read**: Remediation assignment prompt

Mar 23: Media Depot Tour

Week 12: Conferences and Workshop

Mar 28: Remediation
  ➢ **Read**: *Toward a Composition Made Whole*-Ch. 4 (Shipka)

Mar 30: Writing Workshop
  ➢ **Homework**: Bring two hard copies of a three-page proposal for your final project.

Week 13: Technical Affordances

Apr 4: Affordances and Design
  ➢ **Read**: "Affordances" (Kaptelinin); "Affordances and Design" (Dorman), "How to Win Tinder" (Eler and Peyser)

Apr 6: Case Studies—The Heart of Twitter and Facebook Feeds
  ➢ **Read**: "Hearts and Faves: How much Should Twitter Care about its Core Users?" (Ingram); "We didn't <3 the Fire" (Brooke); "Faves" (Cottom); "Blue Feed, Red Feed" (Keegan); "Inside Facebook's (Totally Insane, Unintentionally Gigantic, Hyperpartisan) Political Media Machine" (Herrman)

Week 14: Student Samples

Apr 11: Podcasts and Videos

Apr 13: Websites and Graphic Essays

Week 15: Workshop

Apr 18: Peer Workshop

Apr 20: In-class Work Time

Week 16: Presentations

Apr 25: Roundtable Presentation I

Apr 27: Roundtable Presentation II

Final Projects due May 2