

THEJUMP+

Blog

About



Submissions

Internships

Issue 6.1



Archives



Contact

COURSE ASSIGNMENT & PROJECT TIMELINE – RHETORIC OF MEMES

COURSE

Writing 200 – Writing New Media

Course Description from the Department

In WRITING 200, students analyze and apply rhetorical principles in their writing with “new media.” As members of a media-saturated culture, we know that print text is only one form of writing, and sometimes it is not the most effective choice. Because all of us make sense of texts and issues in a variety of ways, these courses ask students to utilize multimodal (visual, aural, etc.) forms of communication and become more informed, critical consumers of new media writing themselves.

Course Description from the Instructor's Syllabus

Memes not only entertain, they also make claims about our world and how it does, could, and should work. In this mini-course we'll examine what memes say and how they say it, analyzing them from the perspective of visual and argumentative rhetoric. You will also write analyses that convey your own views of contemporary memes, as well as create your own memes. The work you will do in this class will culminate in the creation of an internet website that will help to spread the knowledge of meme culture across U of M and beyond. This is a course in writing and rhetoric, not in contemporary culture, so we will pay particular attention to strategies for effectively conveying your arguments to your audiences of choice.

THEJUMP+

Blog

About



Submissions

Internships

Issue 6.1



Archives



ASSIGNMENT

The website is the combination of two assignments. For the first assignment, students were asked to find an image-macro meme that they liked, or at least that told something to them. They were then asked to analyze that meme in terms of its “heteroglossia” and its “carnavalesque” aspects, following the way Mikhail Bakhtin describes these concepts in “Discourse in the Novel” and “Rabelais and His World.”

For the second assignment, students were asked to find an image-macro meme that they found humorous. They thought about what made the meme funny for them, and if they could find appropriations of that meme that did not make it funny. In short, they were asked to analyze the meme’s humor following some of the concepts that Michele Zappavigna talks about in the chapter “Internet Memes” from her book *Discourse of Twitter and Social Media*. Finally, students designed the website to house the analyses.

PROJECT TIMELINE

The class was a mini-course offered by the Sweetland Center for Writing at the University of Michigan during the second half of the Fall 2013 semester. Being a mini-course, the class met once a week for six times. Week 1 and 2 provided some historical and theoretical background on memetic culture. The first analysis was due by Week 3, while the second analysis by week 4. Week 5 and 6 were dedicated to revise the analyses and design the website.