



Just as *critical making* forms the productive nexus for my own activities as a scholar, so too does this praxis inspire the courses I teach. I approach the classroom as a collaborative space, where rhetorical analysis and media ecology inform *project-oriented* student learning. Whether working with first year undergraduates or with advanced graduate students, treating the classroom as a productive maker-space provides an immediate applicability for the theories, analyses, and critical reflections that inform student engagement and learning. I tell my students to “begin with the end in mind,” and this allows all course readings, online discussions, technical tutorials, and collaborative activities to function as the necessary scaffolding for students’ semester-length projects. There is no lingering question of exigence for the various theories and methods that frame my courses. The theories and methods are *made* relevant to each of my students individually through the making of digital artifacts, through visual design and textual production, through data collection and archive curation, and through scholarly activity and the sharing of insights with their peers.

For most courses I employ a *flipped classroom model*. A flipped classroom utilizes online technology to transform the classroom into a workshop setting. Traditional in-class content such as lectures and reading discussion are facilitated through tutorial videos and discussion forums, and traditional out-of-class activities such as collecting data or designing an infographic are conducted in a collaborative workshop environment. Often, the best opportunities for teaching arise when students struggle to apply course theories and methods to their individual projects. By flipping the classroom, I can intervene and guide students through critical learning activities.

Additionally, my teaching carefully fosters creative risk taking by allowing revision on major course assignments. The actionable feedback students receive through grading encourages the pursuit of exploratory approaches they might otherwise avoid. The project-oriented classroom requires that early on students choose the type of project they will undertake, define the research question/topic that guides their work, or decide what their primary object of study will be for the semester. Rather than looking for “easy” answers or attempting to “confirm” preconceived assumptions, the agency provided to students through *revision-based grading* encourages a rigorous testing of alternative possibilities and a thorough consideration of multiple perspectives.

Along these lines, visual thinking is featured heavily in the courses I design. In *Writing through Big Data*, students visualize Twitter trend data with network graphs to better understand the associations among the top #hashtags, @usernames, and semantic words in their tweet corpora. Likewise, in *Digital Rhetoric as Scholarship*, web design is first approached visually, having students consider everything from font choice and color scheme to navigation layout and content delivery. Furthermore, as the final assignment for many of my courses, students design slideware presentations to visually share with the class the results of their semester-long projects.

Finally, an ecological mindset broadly interconnects all the aspects of *critical making* in my courses. This means that students not only consider the local sustainability and feasibility of their projects, as they fit within their campus communities and daily lives, but students also consider the long-term impact of their projects and reconcile how their local interests fit within a complex diversity of global concerns.