

# Module 2 Overview

## Introduction

Is writing on a keyboard and mouse different than writing with a paper and pencil - how so? Is learning to write with a keyboard and mouse substantially different than learning to write with other writing technologies (e.g. a typewriter)?

We begin the class with a unit on theories of "digital technologies" and the roles they play in our everyday lives. Of particular importance are the "writing" technologies of contemporary work and life. Throughout this module you will be asked to think about how we conceptualize technology, how we make sense of technology, and how we define technologies. Key to your success in this portion of the class is a depth of analysis for the social and material worlds that digital writing technologies occupy. Admittedly, this first unit is a bit dense but learning how to critique and further your understanding of digital technologies is an important first step in achieving mastery in this course. Questions you should feel comfortable answering when you're finished with this module are:

- What is a deterministic view of technology and what are the consequences of that view?
- What are various approaches to how we conceptualize digital writing technology?
- How do writing technologies come to be?

## Overview

Throughout this module you will:

- Read two essays
- Respond to these two essays with your own reading response
  - Your reading response should offer a synthesis and extension of the readings
- Read a collection of your peer's responses (Uploaded on September 14)
- Respond to the collection of peer responses
- Propose a tutorial for our Technology Tutorial assignment
- Write a "script" for this assignment

Additionally, you will view a handful of Adobe XD tutorials and download the prototyping software onto your machine (you get a free license as part of your enrollment in Weber State)

## On Readings & Reading Responses

The two readings for this unit are short but might be a bit heady.

The first reading "Polymedia" is about an ethnographic project examining the role of writing technologies in the lives of migrant families. What I am most looking for you to understand here is what *work* a theory of polymedia does for people who critique writing technologies. This

means you might have to wrestle it for longer than you're used to. I've found it helps to map out theories when I am first learning them. What are the keywords? What are the key assumptions? How do disparate parts work together and, importantly, what's the point? What is the so-what? In other words, I am less interested in a simple summary of how they conducted their research and much more interested in what polymedia means and how we might use a theory of polymedia in our own lives.

The second reading is a review of *A Language of New Media*. FYI: academic book reviews are almost never a purely subjective affair... instead they summarize and put-to-work the longer arguments of the book. You'll see in this review Dilger summarizes and even presses on some of the key concepts of the book. I am not at all interested in hearing if you prefer Dilger's tone or any subjective measure. Instead, I'm curious how you are making sense of the key summarized concepts and, especially, how they relate to our own understanding of polymedia, digital writing technologies, etc.

Both these readings should have you thinking about technologies in your own life. I won't spoil it by saying anymore but I know that I got a lot from these the first time I read them.

## Reading Response 1

- Due Sep 13, 2021 by 11:59pm
- Points 10
- Submitting a file upload
- File Types pdf, doc, and txt

Read [Polymedia.pdf](#)

AND Bradley Dilger's review of *The Language of New Media*

<https://kairos.technorhetoric.net/7.1/reviews/dilger/index.htm> (Links to an external site.)

Write a response that synthesizes the ideas of both pieces.

### Let me be very clear

I am not asking you to "prove" that you read the piece by finding particular parts and then having you parrot those back in writing. Instead, I'm asking you to think about what the key concepts of this reading offer you. I'm asking you to articulate your own extension to these ideas. In short: I am asking you to be the theorist, the intellectual, the philosopher, the scholar. This can be a bit intimidating, I know. But I'll give you feedback and you'll improve.

I will anonymize excerpts from student writings and share on the discussion board (likely with prompts) for us to respond to after September 14.

No late responses will be accepted.