

ENG 313 Writing in the Digital Age

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30-4:45pm

Fontaine 105

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Professor Info

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(she/her/hers)

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- Tues & Thurs, 1:00-3:00 pm
- Wed, 2:00-3:00 pm

About Writing for the Digital Age

Credit: 3

Course Description

This course is an introduction to theories about and forms of digital writing. It will also give students the opportunity to make digital arguments that reflect on digital media themselves. This course aims to help students develop an appreciation for the impact of digital technologies on the field of rhetoric and composition and on practices of writing and to provide opportunities for them to apply their rhetorical skills within digital spaces.

Course Objectives

- Critically analyze digital writing through political, social, and cultural lenses in class discussions, projects, and readings.
- Identify different digital writing forms, modes, and genres across platforms and spaces.
- Deconstruct the politics embedded in interfaces, digital modes of communication, algorithms, artificial intelligence, and the spread of information.
- Learn the history and technologies of the internet, including understanding the back-end of websites, basic HTML5, and search engine optimization.
- Produce multimodal projects that integrate critical analysis, academic work, and digital technologies.

Statement on Inclusive Classroom Policy

"Difference must not be merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic." -Audre Lorde

One of the most important aspects of writing & communication is understanding other people's experiences, perspectives, and identities. Because of this, we will commit to inclusivity in our classroom. We will respect people from all races, ethnicities, cultures, creeds, genders, sexualities, and abilities. In order to practice respect, we will:

- ★ **Avoid harmful language, including racist, homophobic, sexist, ableist, and fat-phobic language.** This type of language can make the classroom uncomfortable or unwelcoming for students, as we never know everyone's experiences in the room.
- ★ **Use everyone's correct names and pronouns.** Make an effort to learn everyone's names and pronouns as that person introduces themselves. If you make a mistake, apologize, correct yourself, and do better in the future.
- ★ **Be part of the ally network.** Marist College is committed to creating safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff. This classroom is a safe zone. If you are part of the LGBTQ+ community or would like to join the Ally Network, learn more about Marist's commitment on the [LGBTQ+ Community](#) page.
- ★ **Pay attention to accessibility.** The goal is to practice accessibility at all times so disabled people do not need to disclose their disabilities if they do not want to. We will learn different methods to make information accessible, such as captioning, describing visual images, alt-text online, plain writing, and more.
- ★ **Leave room for others.** Many of our conversations may foster excitement, passion, and disagreement. Make sure to leave room for others to speak and be contentious about space/time when you speak or post.
- ★ **Call each other in.** We all make mistakes; I know I have! This is a learning environment, and sometimes we need to *unlearn* harmful ideas. If you see a comment or idea that you perceive as hurtful, invite the person who made it to rephrase or rethink that comment.
- ★ **Remember: intention is NOT impact.** Just because your intention may not be to hurt someone, does not mean you won't hurt someone. Pay attention to the impact you have on others. If someone calls you in, take time to listen and learn!

Grading and Assignments

The final grade percentages are broken down in this table. For each type of assignment, though, there will be smaller assignments that add up to a total of the grade percentage. This way, a major focus is on your **process** and thinking through each step of writing, engaging, and revising, rather than just your output.

Assignment Breakdown

Assignment	Final Grade %	Description
Short Activities	40%	Almost every class, you will have some kind of short activity due. These may be reading responses, peer review, outlines, and more. Most short activities will be done in class and submitted on our Discord server to prompt in class discussions.
Assignment 1 (A1): Digital Discourse Community Autoethnography	15% – Proposal 3.75% – First Draft 3.75% – Peer Review Reflection 3.75% – Final Draft 3.75%	Multimodal Choose a digital discourse community you participate in and analyze it, specifically focusing on the overlaps between your identity and the community. Build on the arguments of at least three of the articles we read in class to help ground your analysis.
Assignment 2 (A2): Critical Digital Writing Cultures	10% – Proposal 4% – Final draft 6%	Three options: 1. Analyze a fandom community or meme. 2. Write critical fanfiction about a fictional source text (TV show, book, film, game, etc..). Write a reflection about your choices. 3. Create a fan edit. Write a reflection about your choices.

Assignment 3 (A3): Algorithm Assessment	15% – Algorithmic Assessment Journal 5% – Peer Review Reflection 5% – Journal Reflection 5%	Journal the different ways your algorithm influences what content you see, from advertisements to recommended posts. Analyze one of the algorithms that impacts the information you see every day (social media feed, Google results, streaming suggestions, etc..).
Assignment 4 (A4): Digital Essay	20% – Proposal 5% – Outline 5% – Final 10%	Multimodal Your final digital essay will combined theory, genres, and modes we have practiced throughout the semester. Create a digital essay using any mode—podcast episode, video essay, Twine game, social media series, website, etc.—analyzing a social justice issue in digital communities, communication, or media product. Should be approximately 10 minutes (can be a little over or under).

Grading

Writing is all about practice, process, and labor. Because of this, the assessment for this course follows the **specifications grading** model. Spec grading is all about bundled assignments that have less weight on final grade to help you build towards final projects. Read more about spec grading in "[Yes, Virginia, There's a Better Way to Grade](#)" by Linda Nilson.

You will still be graded, but grading will follow clear guidelines that will be clearly explained and written for you.

Short Activities: For each short activity, there will be three possible grades you can get. For each short activity, I will write out and explain my expectations.

- ★ 2: met all the requirements with a critical eye.
- ★ 1: met most of the requirements.
- ★ 0: did not submit, submitted late without an approved extension, or did not meet important requirements.

Assignments: Larger assignments will be graded out of **10 points**. Similarly to the short activities, I will explain my expectations for each component of an assignment. If you fulfill these expectations, meet all the requirements, and demonstrate a clear understanding of readings/concepts, you will receive a 10.

Failed Assignments: You can make up for **three** failed assignments or short activities. You must meet with me during my office hours or after class to schedule a timeline to make up this work.

Course Policies and Resources

Absences

Attending class and collaborating with your peers is required to excel at this course. Your participation will help develop your communication, writing, and critical thinking skills. While there is not strict attendance policy, **short activities** make up a large portion of your grade. If you are unable to come to class, you can still submit the short activity; I expect you to still engage deeply with the readings.

Late Policy

All assignments are due at 11:59pm. If you are facing an emergency, need accommodations, or have another reason to submit late, please reach out to me and let me know before the deadline. **Asking for extensions is normal if you have an emergency, are sick, or need accommodations.** However, if you submit late without **first** asking for an extension, you will receive an "F" as accordance with the grading system.

Course Discord Server

The main way we will be communicating online is through a course Discord server. Your short activities will be submitted here to foster deeper in person and online conversations. We will have different channels dedicated to all things digital writing, including sharing memes, current events, recommendations, etc.. While you are not required to post on Discord, except for short activities, I encourage you to use the server! **Our inclusive classroom policies apply to Discord, as well.**

Technology

Many of our readings and your assignments will be through Brightspace. You must have access to Brightspace as well as a document-creation software. Everyone at Marist College has access to the Microsoft Suite, including Word and PowerPoint. If you need any help with Marist-based technology, visit the [Information Technology Help Center](#).

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Marist College is a learning community dedicated to helping students develop the intellect, character, and skills required for enlightened, ethical, and productive lives in the global community of the 21st century. Students are expected to pursue excellence in their education while being honest about their work and fair to other members of the

learning community. **All work presented to instructors for evaluation must reflect their own ideas and effort, and must properly acknowledge any contributions of others, including ChatGPT.** Students should expect this honesty and fairness in others as well. As members of the Marist learning community, all students should adhere to the principles of academic integrity as set forth in the Marist Academic Integrity Policy.

Disability Accommodations

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Office of Accommodations and Accessibility at (845) 575-3274, Donnelly Hall 226 or via email at accommodations@marist.edu as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

Writing Center

The Writing Center offers one-on-one writing tutoring to all students on campus, both undergraduate and graduate students, in all fields of study and at all levels of study. Students can make an appointment for a Writing Center session by visiting marist.mywconline.com. The Writing Center is located on the third floor of the library in room 334. For more information, visit the Writing Center website.

Title IX

Marist College is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, support is available. Please contact the Title IX Office at titleix@marist.edu or (845) 575-3799 or visit www.marist.edu/title-ix to file a report. Please be aware that faculty and staff are required to disclose incidents of sexual harassment or other potential violations of the Marist College Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy to the Title IX Office. To speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, contact Counseling Services at (845) 575-3314, Health Services at (845) 575-3270, or Campus Ministry at (845) 575-3000 (x2275).

Calendar

Week	Date	Read for Class	Activity
Unit 1: Introducing Theory & Concepts			
One Introductions	Tues, 1/16	Introductions	Short activity: Introductions
	Thurs, 1/18	"Digital Rhetoric: Toward an Integrated Theory" by James Zappen "Screen Reading: A Gallery of (Re)Imagined Interfaces" by Bethany Monea	Short activity: Screen reading response
Two Community & Ethics	Tues, 1/23	"What Reddit has to Teach Us about Discourse Communities" by Ryan Shepherd	Short activity: Mini discourse community analysis
	Thurs, 1/25	"#transform(ing) DH Writing and Research: An Autoethnography of Digital Humanities and Feminist Ethics" by Moya Bailey "I didn't sign up for your research study: The ethics of using 'public' data" by Amber Buck & Devon Ralston	Short activity: Create ethical principles for researching online communities

Three Publics	Tues, 1/30	"Technofeminism, Twitter, and the counterpublic rhetoric of @SheRatesDogs" by Alexis Sabryn Walston	Short activity: Counterpublics in the wild A1 proposal due at 11:59pm
	Thurs, 2/1	"Parasitic Publics" by Kyle Larson & George McHendry We will watch in class: "The Alt-Right Playbook: Mainstreaming" by Innuendo Studios	Short activity: Disinformation
Unit 2: Digital Writing Cultures: Memes and Fandoms			
Four Visual rhetoric	Tues, 2/6	"The Rhetoric of Description" by Margaret Price & Erin Kathleen Ball	Short activity: Participatory description
	Thurs, 2/8	Peer Review of A1 first draft	A1 first draft due for class A1 peer review reflection due at 11:59pm
Five Memes	Tues, 2/13	SNOW DAY	N/A Short activity: Analyze memes

	Thurs, 2/15	"Queer Memes as Rhetorical Scenes" by Abbie Levesque Decamp	Short activity: Political memes
Six Mems & Fandoms	Tues, 2/20	" The role of popular media in 2016 US presidential election memes " by Kyra Osten Hunting We will watch in class: " CTRL+ALT+DEL SLA:3 " by hbomborguy	Short activity: Reading responses
	Thurs, 2/22	"Remix Literacy and Fan Compositions" by Kyle Stedman	Short activity: Fan remixes A1 final draft due at 11:59pm
Seven Queer Fandoms	Tues, 2/27	" theyre all trans sharon ": Authoring Gender in Video Game Fan Fiction " by Brianna Dym, Jed Brubaker, Casey Fiesler	Short activity: Fanfiction data
	Thurs, 2/29	" Bound princes and monogamy warnings: Harry Potter, slash, and queer performance in LiveJournal communities " by Darlene Hampton	Short activity: Fanfiction data, part 2 A2 Proposal Due

Eight Race in Fandoms	Tues, 3/5	" African American acafandom and other strangers: New genealogies of fan studies " by Rebecca Wanzo " On the Lie of 'Let People Like Things' " by Stitch	Short activity: Critical fandoms
	Thurs, 3/7	" There's Another River on the Other Side " by Mithrigil	Short activity: Close reading analysis
Spring Break, 3/9-3/17 -- A3 continue journaling			
Unit 3: Rhetoric of Interfaces, Data, and Algorithms			
Nine Search Engine Optimization	Tues, 3/19	" Introduction: The Power of Algorithms ," <i>Algorithms of Oppression</i> by Safiya Umoja Noble	Short activity: Reading response A3 begin journaling
	Thurs, 3/21	We will watch in class: " Here's What Ethical AI Really Means " by Philosophy Tube	Short activity: Ethical AI A3 continue journaling A2 final draft due at 11:59pm
Ten AI Writing	Tues, 3/26	No reading	Short activity: Adopt or Not? A3 continue journaling
	Thurs, 3/28	" Supreme Court examines whether government can	Short activity: Response to readings

		combat disinformation online "Bill that could ban TikTok passed in the House. Here's what to know"	A3 continue journaling
Eleven AI Writing	Tues, 4/2	Peer discussion: Sharing journals	A3 continue journaling
	Thurs, 4/4	No class: Cara at conference	A3 Peer discussion reflection due at 11:50pm A3 Continue Journaling
Unit 4: Games: Merging Algorithms, Writing, and Culture			
Twelve Games as Writing	Tues, 4/9	No class: Assessment day.	No class: Assessment day.
	Thurs, 4/11	" The Rhetoric of Video Games " by Ian Bogost	Short activity: " You are Jeff Bezos " response A3 journal reflection and journal entries due 11:59pm
Thirteen Embodiment	Tues, 4/16	" Queer Games After Empathy: Feminism and Haptic Game Design Aesthetics from Consent to Cuteness to the Radically Soft " by Teddy Pozo	Short activity: dys4ia reflection
	Thurs, 4/18	We will watch in class: " Racism in Gaming " by	Short activity: Notetaking from video

		Foreign Man in a Foreign Land	
Fourteen Politics of Games	Tues, 4/23	Attend "Shakespeare's Annual Birthday Party" at the Cornell Boathouse!	Short activity: None
	Thurs, 4/25	Mario Kart day! Meet at Henry Hudson Room	Short activity: None
Fifteen Wrapping Up	Tues, 4/30	Peer review of outlines! We will watch in class: " Serious Sonic Lore Analysis " by HBomborguy	A4 Proposal/Outline due before class
	Thurs, 5/2	LAST CLASS	Short activity: Social media series/thread/post summarizing class
Final	A4 final project due Tuesday, May 7 at 11:59pm		