

Dr. Chris Lindgren

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Overview

Rhetoricians still seem to be coping with how to study and theorize the rhetorical relationship between people and technologies. The ancient art of rhetoric was originally developed within a particular city-state and focuses on the use of speech. In this class, I am challenging us to consider how we dwell in a very different *polis* (city-state): a place where businesses and governments have invested in a global infrastructure of networked databases that perform operations with textual user-data.* Such a communication infrastructure reconfigures the relationships between people and their use of tools and language. Consider some of the following differences between speech communication and contemporary communication mediated by digital and computational technologies:

- Since different people are delivered different content with the same applications, can an interface or device be analyzed with concepts derived about speech interactions or the study of texts?
- How about the creation, maintenance, and revision of networked databases or machine-learning algorithms that such devices employ?

In response to these questions, we will survey, interrogate, and apply developing bodies of rhetorical approaches to theorizing the rhetorics of technology that integrate with the linguistic-textual. Our shared main aim involves understanding how traditionally theorized and practiced rhetorics should be intertwined with the study of our everyday, digital practices that are linked to user-data. What can be learned about such an infrastructure, when we realize that user-data are not discretely confined to singular purposes, but multiple and rhetorical? Let's put this fact about user-data into some recent situations:

- Recently, [Netflix trolled 54 of their users](#) who watched a particular movie everyday for 2 weeks ([Wittmer, 2017](#)). Whether or not Netflix made this information up, how are data being analyzed in unregulated ways at Netflix or any other networked application (*cf.* [Uber](#)^{1,2}, [Tinder](#), etc.)?
- Facebook has been investing and accepting money from businesses^{1,2} and politicians^{1,2} to develop tailor-made psychographically curated audiences to target fine-grained audiences for sometimes unethical purposes.
- Facebook and Twitter enable politicians the ability to [block citizens](#) from their pages and accounts.
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) plans to [advance social media surveillance strategies](#).
- Hundreds of thousands of American identities were stolen and used to spam the latest FCC Net Neutrality commenting site with pro-repeal opinions ([Kao, 2017](#)).

I am asking us all to take a step back, pause, and consider the following important question: **How can and should we, as rhetoricians, study such a digital infrastructure with very different metes and bounds than those of rhetoric's origins in ancient Athens?**

I suggest that we start by reflecting on our own position within this rhetorical landscape. By better understanding our own relationship with our everyday digital, networked technologies, we can ask better questions, develop better methodologies, and produce more substantive rhetorical theories for our time. To accomplish this goal, we will examine rhetorical and STS theories that have been and have yet to be integrated with that of mediation, activity, feminist, queer, and race. Graded projects will include weekly annotations during the first half of the course, as a method to prime our class discussions. Additionally, the annotations will help each student work toward the construction of their own rhetorical methodology. In the second half of the course, students will apply these methodologies in a small-scale autoethnography about their own rhetorical experiences with a networked technology. Students will come away from the course with the following: 1) foundational knowledge about emerging methodologies in rhetorics of technology, 2) a pilot of their own methodology, and 3) preliminary insights about their own rhetorical

experiences with a networked technology. *PhD students will also be required to articulate implications that their projects have for rhetoric by writing about their methodology and preliminary findings.*

*Check out your own personal archive of user-data that Google has been collecting about you via their [Takeout](#) service.

Objectives

- Survey contemporary interdisciplinary research on rhetorics and technology.
- Be able to describe particular lines of inquiry within the diverse fields of rhetoric and technology.
- Formulate a research problem and methodology about a particular technological issue.
- Propose, conduct, and write up preliminary findings derived from your research study, which also poses implications for a particular field in rhetoric.
- Manage and organize qualitative data (fieldnotes / memos).
- Learn and apply basic grounded analysis techniques.

Metalogue: Explaining the format of the course

I've designed this course in a manner that can be summed up as the 2 following phases:

1. Communal introductory survey
2. Independent investigations

The first phase offers us a the opportunity to survey scholarship from a variety of subfields in a condensed and intensive environment. This phase serves as an abridged, introductory means, rather than comprehensive or even foundational. For example, some readings may be foundational texts that outline frameworks for your future projects. Other readings offer us scholars who have applied foundational theories, so you can see particular problems and approaches to studying those problems.

The second phase of the course provides us time to independently dig deeper into one of those subfields. Based on your interests, you invent and develop a small study into a research problem that you hook into one of the subfields reviewed in the first phase of the course. This is your

opportunity to apply your developing scholarly skills of primary and secondary research with the intent to contribute to the ongoing scholarly conversation.

Overall, this approach to the course is akin to the idea of discovering a contemporary band that you love and subsequently digging into their historical roots. Building on this analogy, you are also an up-and-coming musician, who carves out new creative pathways.

How 5674 differs from a methods course

ENGL 5674 differs from traditional methods courses in that the latter type surveys a variety of **methods**, rather than focusing on just one. Additionally, in methods courses, students typically must dig deeper into methods of their own particular interest. In this course, I ask you to learn autoethnographic methods for the specific objectives outlined in the next section.

Course Materials

Tools

- Laptop computer (during class; let me know if you do not have access to a laptop). **Be sure to have the means to log into your account vis-a-vis the 2-factor authentication.**
- VT-affiliated Google Drive: Used for organizing and sharing work files.

Texts

You are not required to buy any texts for this course, as I will provide PDF versions. However, here is a list of books and edited collections included on the syllabus for those who wish to purchase their own copies.

List of Readings

Banks, A. (2006). *Race, rhetoric, and technology: Searching for higher ground*. LEA and NCTE.

Blas, Z. and Cárdenas, M. (2013). Imaginary computational systems: queer technologies and transreal aesthetics. *AI & Society*, 28, pp. 559–566.

Brown, Jr., J. (2015). *Ethical programs: Hospitality and the rhetorics of software*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. Available at <http://www.digitalculture.org/books/ethical-programs-hospitality-and-the-rhetorics-of-software/>.

Bivens, R. (27 Jan. 2016). Programming violence under a progressive surface: Facebook's software misgenders users. The Society Pages. Retrieved 06 Feb. 2016 from <https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2016/01/27/programming-violence-under-a-progressive-surface-facebooks-software-misgenders-users/>.

Burke, K. (1950/1969). *A rhetoric of motives*. University of California Press.

Dadas, C. (2017). Hashtag activism: The promise and risk of “attention.” In D. M. Walls & S. Vie, (Eds.) *Social Writing/Social Media: Publics, Presentations, and Pedagogies* (pp. 17-36). Perspectives on Writing. Fort Collins, CO: The WAC Clearinghouse and UP of Colorado. Retrieved Jan. 6, 2018 from <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/social/>.

- Daniels, J. (2012). Race and racism in Internet Studies: A review and critique. *New Media & Society*, 15, pp. 695–719.
- Edwards, D. (2017). On circulatory encounters: The case for tactical rhetorics. *Enculturation*, Issue 25. Retrieved 11 Dec. 2017 from http://enculturation.net/circulatory_encounters.
- Freelon, Deen and McIlwain, Charlton D. and Clark, Meredith D, Beyond the Hashtags: #Ferguson, #Blacklivesmatter, and the Online Struggle for Offline Justice (February 29, 2016). Center for Media & Social Impact, American University, Forthcoming. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2747066>.
- Frith, J. (2017). Big data, technical communication, and the smart city. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 31, pp. 168-187.
- Haas, C. (1996). *Writing technology: Studies on the materiality of literacy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Harris, R. (2000). *Rethinking writing*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Hartzog, M. (2017). Inventing mosquitoes: Tracing the topology of vectors for disease. In C. Boyle & L. Walsh, (Eds.), *Topologies as Techniques for a Post-Critical Rhetoric*, (pp. 75-98). Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hawhee, D. (2004). *Bodily arts: Rhetoric and athletics in ancient Greece*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Lamp, K. (2011). 'A city of brick': Visual rhetoric in Roman rhetorical theory and practice. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 44, pp. 171-193.
- Lum, K., & Isaac, W. (2016). To predict and serve? *Significance*, 13(5), 14-19.
- Keyword articles from inaugural issues of *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 1(1-2): Bio/Logics, pp. 33-35; Biometrics, pp. 35-38; Biopolitics, pp. 38-42; Microaggressions, pp. 129-134; Performativity, pp. 148-150.
- Mattern, S. (2017). *Code + clay ... Data + dirt: Five-thousand years of urban media*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

- Noble, S. U. (2018). *Algorithms of oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Poe-Alexander, K. and Hahner, L. A. (2017). The intimate screen: Revisualizing understandings of down syndrome through digital activism on Instagram. In D. M. Walls & S. Vie, (Eds.) *Social Writing/Social Media: Publics, Presentations, and Pedagogies* (pp. 225-244). Perspectives on Writing. Fort Collins, CO: The WAC Clearinghouse and UP of Colorado. Retrieved Jan. 6, 2018 from <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/social/>.
- Roundtree, A. K. (2013). *Computer simulation, rhetoric, and the scientific imagination*. New York, NY: Lexington Books.
- Sano-Franchini, J. (2017). Feminist rhetorics and interaction design: Facilitating socially responsible design. L. Potts and M. Salvo, (Eds.), In *Rhetoric and Experience Architecture* (pp. 84-110). Anderson, SC: Parlor Press.
- Seaver, N. (2017). Algorithms as culture: Some tactics for the ethnography of algorithmic systems. *Big Data & Society*, 4(2), pp. 1-12.
- Star, S. L. (1990). Power, technology and the phenomenology of conventions: On being allergic to onions. *The Sociological Review*, 38(1), 26-56.
- Takayoshi, P., Tomlinson, E., and Castillo, J. (2010). The construction of research problems and methods. In K. Powell and P. Takayoshi, (Eds.), *Practicing Research in Writing Studies* (pp. 97-121). New York, NY: Hampton Press.
- Vee, A. (2017). *Coding literacy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wickman, C. (2013). Observing inscriptions at work: Visualization and text production in experimental physics research. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 22, pp. 150-171.
- Yam, S. (2017). Instagramming the Starbucks *Bing Sutt*: Nostalgia memory kitsch and the construction of cosmopolitan consumer subjects. *Enculturation*, Issue 25. Retrieved 11 Dec. 2017 from http://enculturation.net/instagramming_the_starbucks_bing_sutt.
- yergeau, m. (2018). *Authoring Autism: on rhetoric and neurological queerness*. Durham, NC: Duke UP.

List of Supplementary Readings

- Bowker, G. C. & Star, S. L. (1999/2000). *Sorting things out: Classification and its consequences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Clark, D. (2010). Shaped and Shaping Tools: The rhetorical nature of technical communication technologies. Spilka, Ed., *Digital literacy for Technical communication*, (pp. 85-102). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kaptelinin, V. and Nardi, B. (2006). *Acting with technology: Activity Theory and Interaction Design*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Spinuzzi, C. (2003). *Tracing genres through organizations: A sociocultural approach to information design*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Tufekci, Z. (2014). Engineering the public: Big data, surveillance and computational politics. First Monday, 19(7). Retrieved 2 Dec. 2017 from <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/4901>
- Wilson III, E. J. & Costanza-Chock, S. (2012). New voices on the net: The digital journalism divide and the costs of network exclusion. In L. Nakamura & P.A. Chow-White (Eds.), *Race After the Internet* (pp. 246-268). New York, NY: Routledge.

Projects

PROJECTS	POINTS MA	POINTS PHD
Use-Annotations	350	275
Proposal	200	225
Fieldnotes & Memos	100	125
Rhetorical Experience (Paper)	350	375
Methodological Reflection	n/a	100
Total	1,000	1,000

To learn more about a particular project, click on the respective heading below.

Use-Annotations

Timeframe: 01/16/2018 – ongoing

Proposal

Timeframe: 02/20/2018 – 03/15/2018

Fieldnotes & Memos

Timeframe: 03/15/2018 – throughout the semester

Rhetorical Experience Paper

Timeframe: 03/01/2018 – throughout the semester

Methodological Reflection (PhD Only)

Timeframe: 03/01/2018 – throughout the semester

Use-Annotations

Timeframe: 01/16 – ongoing

Description

I call these use-annotations, since I ask you to first summarize the text and subsequently consider how to apply it. Writing annotations is an integral skill for scholars to understand their colleagues' arguments. The process implicates you in a particular rhetorical engagement with the texts that you read, since you must summarize these texts in a way that imagines the author(s) audiences and purposes, but we must also imagine how to apply it in our own professional contexts. To fulfill these needs, the annotations must include the following 2 main parts with respective properties:

Annotation structure

Paragraph 1 – Recasting the argument:

1. State the main problem and purpose.
2. State the main argument.
3. Summarize what claims build the scholar's case. This can manifest in numerous ways in rhetorical scholarship. Here are some possible strategies that we will come across:
 - Draws from previous research to define a research problem.
 - Uses some combination of theory and “method” to respond to such a problem.
 - States what implications and conclusions can be drawn, due to their findings or argument.

Paragraph 2 – Application and discussion:

- Make connections with prior readings, which can help you develop a methodology;
- Ask questions about sources of confusion, disagreement, or what you deem as important; and/or
- Consider potential ideas and questions about how to apply or respond.

See this [example](#) for your reference.

Logistics

- ~300-400 words, unless otherwise noted.
- Write 10 total sets of use-annotations: 7 sets prior to Spring Break; then 3 more individual annotations during your individual study.
- Uses my “brand” of APA in which you cite the page numbers of particular places of the text, while avoiding direct quotation.
- Due before class in 2 designated Google Drive folders. The first will be shared just before class within our shared Google Drive folder. The second will be shared with me within your personal Drive folder for review purposes. Accordingly, please create the following baseline structure-scheme for this class in your VT Google Drive:

`/engl5674s18-[last name][firstname initial]
/annotations
wk1-[author-lastname]-[author-lastname]`

Rubric

- Adheres to the format, structure, and citation style noted above. (Page numbers throughout are vital components!)
- Demonstrates engagement with the arguments and aspects of the text.

You will receive either a Pass or Fail for each annotation set. A set encompasses the total annotations for that particular week. I will provide feedback that helps orient you to what issues need to be addressed, if necessary.

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Schedule

For good measure, press cmd+shift+r (Mac) or ctrl+chift+r (PC) to refresh the page.

Since no class dynamic is the same, I sometimes must make adjustments to the schedule. If this is the case, I will announce such changes in advance to help you adjust accordingly.

WEEK 1 – STARTING POINTS

Tuesday – 01/16: Class Review

Readings

- Syllabus

Thursday – 01/18: Extending Rhetoric: Language and Technology

Readings

- Burke (1950/1969). Traditional principles of rhetoric. Chapter 2 in A rhetoric of motives (pp. 49-65). University of California Press.
- Haas, C. (1996). Chapters 1 & 2 in Writing technology: Studies on the materiality of literacy (pp. 1-47). New York, NY: Routledge.
- ~~Clark, D. (2010). Shaped and Shaping Tools: The rhetorical nature of technical communication technologies. Spilka, Ed., Digital literacy for Technical communication, (pp. 85-102). New York, NY: Routledge.~~

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive

WEEK 2 - THEORIES OF MEDIATION & MATERIALITY

Tuesday – 01/23: What is Language?

Readings

- Harris, R. (2000). Rethinking writing. New York, NY: Continuum. Chp. 3, "Writing off the page," (pp. 64-90). (Paired with handout summarizing Aristotle's and Saussure's respective semiological theories of language.)
- Chapter in Vee, A. (2017). Coding literacy. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press: Chapter 2, "Sociomaterialities of Programming and Writing," pp. 95-138.

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive

Thursday – 01/25: Language & Material Infrastructure

Readings

- Lamp, K. (2011). 'A city of brick': Visual rhetoric in Roman rhetorical theory and practice. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 44, pp. 171-193.
- Mattern, S. (2017). Code + clay ... Data + dirt: Five-thousand years of urban media. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, Chp. 4, Speaking stones, (pp. 114-135).
- Gillespie, T. (2017, August 25). Is "platform" the right metaphor for the technology companies that dominate digital media? Nieman Lab. Retrieved January 22, 2018, from <http://www.niemanlab.org/2017/08/is-platform-the-right-metaphor-for-the-technology-companies-that-dominate-digital-media/>.
- Watch the video at Kim, K., Jackson, B., Karamouzas, I., Adeagbo, I., Guy, S. J., Graff, R., and Keefe, D. F. (2015). Bema: A multimodal interface for expert experiential analysis of political assemblies at the pnyx in Ancient Greece. University of Minnesota: Interactive Visualization Lab. Retrieved 22 Jan. 2018 from, <http://ivlab.cs.umn.edu/generated/pub-Kim-2015-Bema.php>.

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive. No need to annotate the video about the Pynx simulation research, but it will help us frame the importance of *speaking stones*, so to speak.

WEEK 3 – ALGORITHMS & PROCEDURES

Tuesday – 01/30: Hospitality, Circulation, & Place

Readings

- Brown, Jr., J. (2015). Processing power: Procedural rhetoric and protocol. Chapter in *Ethical programs: Hospitality and the rhetorics of software*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. Available at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/dh/13474172.0001.001/1:6/--ethical-programs-hospitality-and-the-rhetorics-of-software?g=dculture;rgn=div1;view=fulltext;xc=1>.
- Edwards, D. (2017). On circulatory encounters: The case for tactical rhetorics. *Enculturation*, Issue 25. Retrieved 11 Dec. 2017 from http://enculturation.net/circulatory_encounters.
- Yam, S. (2017). Instagramming the Starbucks *Bing Sutt*: Nostalgia memory kitsch and the construction of cosmopolitan consumer subjects. *Enculturation*, Issue 25. Retrieved 11 Dec. 2017 from http://enculturation.net/instagramming_the_starbucks_bing_sutt.

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive

Thursday – 02/01: Data Infrastructure

Readings

- Frith, J. (2017). Big data, technical communication, and the smart city. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 31, pp. 168-187.
- Lum, K., & Isaac, W. (2016). To predict and serve? *Significance*, 13(5), 14-19.
- Johnson, S. (2018, Jan. 16). Beyond the Bitcoin Bubble. *The New York Times*. Retrieved 17 Jan. 2018 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/16/magazine/beyond-the-bitcoin-bubble.html>.

- Tufekci, Z. (2014). Engineering the public: Big data, surveillance and computational politics. *First Monday*, 19(7). Retrieved 2 Dec. 2017 from <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/4901>.
- --. (2018, Jan. 16). It's the (Democracy-poisoning) Golden Age of free speech. *WIRED.com*. Retrieved 17 Jan. 2018 from <https://www.wired.com/story/free-speech-issue-tech-turmoil-new-censorship/>.

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive

WEEK 4 - RACE & RACISM, AND ACTIVISM

Tuesday – 02/06: Race and Racism

Readings

- Chapter 5 in Banks, A. (2006). *Race, rhetoric, and technology: Searching for higher ground*. LEA and NCTE.
- Daniels, J. (2012). Race and racism in Internet Studies: A review and critique. *New Media & Society*, 15, pp. 695–719.
- Chapter in Noble, S. U. (2018). *Algorithms of oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*. New York, NY: NYU Press: Chapter 2, Searching for black girls, Kindle locations 1174-1791.
- Wilson III, E.J. & Costanza Chock, S. (2012). New voices on the net: The digital journalism divide and the costs of network exclusion. In L. Nakamura & P.A. Chow White (Eds.), *Race After the Internet* (pp. 246–268). New York, NY: Routledge.

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive

Thursday – 02/08: Activism

Readings

- Freelon, Deen and McIlwain, Charlton D. and Clark, Meredith D, Beyond the Hashtags: #Ferguson, #Blacklivesmatter, and the Online Struggle for Offline Justice (February 29, 2016). Center for Media & Social Impact, American University, Forthcoming. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2747066>.
- Poe-Alexander, K. and Hahner, L. A. (2017). The intimate screen: Revisualizing understandings of down syndrome through digital activism on Instagram. In D. M. Walls & S. Vie, (Eds.) *Social Writing/Social Media: Publics, Presentations, and Pedagogies* (pp. 225-244). Perspectives on Writing. Fort Collins, CO: The WAC Clearinghouse and UP of Colorado. Retrieved Jan. 6, 2018 from <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/social/>.

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive

WEEK 5 - QUEER & FEMINISMS

Tuesday – 02/13: Queer & Feminist Concepts, Bodies, Minds, & Technologies

Readings

- Blas, Z. and Cárdenas, M. (2013). Imaginary computational systems: queer technologies and transreal aesthetics. *AI & Society*, 28, pp. 559–566.
- Keyword articles from inaugural issues of *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 1(1-2): Bio/Logics, pp. 33-35; Biometrics, pp. 35-38; Biopolitics, pp. 38-42; Microaggressions, pp. 129-134; Performativity, pp. 148-150. *Note: I included the entire 2 issues in the Google Drive folder, because it is just so wonderful to have on hand.*
- Chapter from yergeau, m. (2018). *Authoring Autism: on rhetoric and neurological queerness*. Durham, NC: Duke UP: Chp. 1, Intervention, pp. 35-88.

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive: Choose at least 2 keywords to summarize from TSQ.

Thursday – 02/15: Rhetoric and embodied practices + Gender & Programming Values

Readings

- Chapters from Hawhee, D. (2004). *Bodily arts: Rhetoric and athletics in ancient Greece*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press. Introduction, pp. 15-22; Chapter 3 - Kairotic bodies, pp. 65-85.
- Dadas, C. (2017). Hashtag activism: The promise and risk of "attention." In D. M. Walls & S. Vie, (Eds.) *Social Writing/Social Media: Publics, Presentations, and Pedagogies* (pp. 17-36). Perspectives on Writing. Fort Collins, CO: The WAC Clearinghouse and UP of Colorado. Retrieved Jan. 6, 2018 from <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/social/>.
- Bivens, R. (27 Jan. 2016). Programming violence under a progressive surface: Facebook's software misgenders users. The Society Pages. Retrieved 06 Feb. 2016 from <https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2016/01/27/programming-violence-under-a-progressive-surface-facebooks-software-misgenders-users/>.
- wilkie & Bieda, L. (2012). Reuleaux selectors. wilkie writes a thing [personal blog]. Retrieved 06 Feb. 2016 from <https://wilkie.how/posts/reuleaux-selectors>. (PDF also available on Drive.) Be sure to check out their prototype here: <https://wilkie.github.io/reuleaux-selectors/>.

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive

WEEK 6 - RHETORICAL ACTIVITY IN THE SCIENCES

Tuesday – 02/20: Rhetoric, Science & Technology

Readings

- Hartzog, M. (2017). Inventing mosquitoes: Tracing the topology of vectors for disease. In C. Boyle & L. Walsh, (Eds.), *Topologies as Techniques for a Post-Critical Rhetoric*, (pp. 75-98). Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Star, S. L. (1990). Power, technology and the phenomenology of conventions: On being allergic to onions. *The Sociological Review*, 38(1), 26–56.

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive

Thursday – 02/22: Visuals, Language, and Simulations in the Sciences

Readings

- Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-18), & 4 (pp. 39-66) from Roundtree, A. K. (2013). *Computer simulation, rhetoric, and the scientific imagination*. New York, NY: Lexington Books.
- Wickman, C. (2013). Observing inscriptions at work: Visualization and text production in experimental physics research. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 22, pp. 150-171.

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive

WEEK 7 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES & METHOD

Tuesday – 02/27: Critical Approaches to Studying a Digital Infrastructure

Readings

- Sano-Franchini, J. (2017). Feminist rhetorics and interaction design: Facilitating socially responsible design. L. Potts and M. Salvo, (Eds.), In *Rhetoric and Experience Architecture* (pp. 84-89). Anderson, SC: Parlor Press.
- Seaver, N. (2017). Algorithms as culture: Some tactics for the ethnography of algorithmic systems. *Big Data & Society*, 4(2), pp. 1-12.
- ~~Chps. 1 & 2 in Spinuzzi, C. (2003). *Tracing genres through organizations: A sociocultural approach to information design*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.~~
- Star, S. L. (1999). The ethnography of infrastructure. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 43(3), pp. 377-391.
- Takayoshi, P., Tomlinson, E., and Castillo, J. (2010). The construction of research problems and methods. In K. Powell and P. Takayoshi, (Eds.), *Practicing Research in Writing Studies* (pp. 97-121). New York, NY: Hampton Press.

Due

- Instead of the usual use-annotations, you will reflect on these 3 scholarly calls to study technological systems through the prompts provided at the end of Takayoshi *et al.* In addition to the research problem itself, what type of contexts will you reflect on and/or observe over time? What kinds of data might help you refine this research problem?

Other Information

- Announcement to come, regarding classtime, since I will be away at a conference.

Thursday – 03/01: Types of Autoethnographies**Readings**

- Proposal project page.
- Ellis, C., Adams, T.E., & A.P. Bochner. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 12(1). Retrieved 14 Jan. 2016 from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095>.
- Pace, S. (Apr. 2012). Writing the self into research: Using grounded theory analytic strategies in autoethnography. *TEXT*, 16(1). Retrieved 14 Jan. 2016 from <http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue13/Pace.pdf>.

Due

- Instead of the use-annotation, please revise your earlier ideas in lieu of the new readings about autoethnographies and the feedback that you received on Tuesday. Please write a wholly new document by responding to the following prompts:
 1. What type of autoethnography you will conduct and write up;
 2. How and why that type will serve your research problem best;
 3. What concepts you will synthesize to help you refine your problem and guide your data collection, production, and analysis; and
 4. Discuss what data you will indeed collect/produce.

With each of these prompts, go back to our readings and make your case by drawing on past scholars to back up your decisions.

**WEEK 8 –
SPRING BREAK**

Tuesday – 03/06: Spring Break - No Class

Thursday – 03/08: Spring Break - No Class

WEEK 9 – INVENTING OUR PROJECTS

Tuesday – 03/13: On writing fieldnotes

Readings

- Wolfinger, N. H. (2002). On writing fieldnotes: Collection strategies and background expectancies. *Qualitative Research*, 2(1), pp. 85-93.
- Sanjek, R. (Apr. 2012). A vocabulary for fieldnotes. In R. Sanjek (Ed.), *Fieldnotes: The makings of anthropology* (pp. 92-121). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive. Use these annotations as a means to critically consider what kinds of fieldnotes you will write up and what they might be about. Of course, back up your choices with specific ideas/claims made by Sanjek and Wolfinger as a means to develop content for you proposal due on Thursday.
-

Thursday – 03/15: Proposals Due + Doc Reviews

Readings

- None.

Due

- Proposal due in Google Drive. Please share the full version in the class folder. Additionally, provide 2 comments that solicit guided feedback for all of us to consider in class. We will use the comments features to supply suggestions.

WEEK 10 – REFINING METHODOLOGIES

Tuesday – 03/20: Methodology-Making

Readings

- Two articles/chapters that pertain to the construction of your methodology, or specific scholarship with which your work converses.

Due

- Use-annotations in Google Drive. If the scholarship helps with your epistemology, your use-annotation should reflect that goal. If the scholarship helps you with narrowing your conversation, try to explain why you think that is the case. Both will provide you with the means to examine your own tacit assumptions about their work and your own analysis.
- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.

Thursday – 03/22: Fieldnote Work

Readings

- As needed: artifacts, fieldwork, etc.

Due

- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.
- In class, we will coordinate a fieldnote analysis day. To facilitate the process, I want you to provide a *methodological guide* for your peers. Accordingly, prepare a short document that articulates your research problem, questions, and a 4-5 sentence blurb about your methodology.

In other words, those 4-5 sentences explain how and why you know what to write about in your fieldnotes, and by what epistemology guides your interpretation of such fieldnotes. In so doing, it should prove interesting to garner other readings of your fieldnotes.

WEEK 11 – REFINING METHODOLOGIES, CONTINUED

Tuesday – 03/27: Upon Reflection: Revisiting Prior Works

Readings

- Reread 1-2 pieces central to your methodology. Specifically the readings from the first phase of the course.

Due

- For this last use-annotation, please rewrite your summary without relying on your old summary. Write your summary paragraph knowing exactly which aspects of the piece are most integral to your project. Then, in the second paragraph, provide a more detailed explanation about how this work has already proven important for understanding how to make choices about what artifacts to collect/create + how to understand them as part of rhetorical activity.
- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.

Thursday – 03/29: Fieldnote Work

Readings

- As needed: artifacts, fieldwork, etc.

Due

- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.
- In class, we will conduct lightning review rounds. Accordingly, each of you will present your re-readings of prior work from the course, articulating 1) how you are putting it into scholarly action, and 2) what implications you think this has for understanding rhetoric. I would like each of you to use Google Slides to facilitate a quick rendering of the 2 aforementioned subjects, 1

slide per prompt. It is a challenge, because you have roughly 4 minutes to explain and 3 minutes for Q&A. Peers, be prepared to quickly ask questions and provide generous support and feedback about their aims and direction.

WEEK 12 - HISTORICIZING & ARTIFACTS

Tuesday – 04/03: How to historicize the rhetorically mediated experiences in question

Readings

- As needed: artifacts, fieldwork, etc.
- TBA

Due

- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.
 - TBA
-

Thursday – 04/05: Historicizing work, continued

Readings

- As needed: artifacts, fieldwork, etc.

Due

- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.
 - TBA
-

WEEK 13 - PROGRESS REPORTS

Tuesday – 04/10: Progress Presentations -- Day 1

Readings

- As needed: artifacts, fieldwork, etc.
- TBA

Due

- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.
- TBA

Thursday – 04/12: Progress Presentations -- Day 2

Readings

- As needed: artifacts, fieldwork, etc.

Due

- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.
- TBA

WEEK 14 - INSIGHT MAPPING & AUTOETHNOGRAPHY EXAMPLES

Tuesday – 04/17: Mapping Insights**Readings**

- As needed: artifacts, fieldwork, etc.
- TBA

Due

- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.
- TBA

Thursday – 04/19: Learning from AE examples: On writing up your work**Readings**

- As needed: artifacts, fieldwork, etc.

Due

- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.
- TBA

**WEEK 15 –
DRAFT
WORKSHOPS****Tuesday – 04/24: Workshop on Introduction + Methodology****Readings**

- As needed: artifacts, fieldwork, etc.
- TBA

Due

- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.
- TBA

Thursday – 04/26: Workshop on Findings/Analysis

Readings

- As needed: artifacts, fieldwork, etc.

Due

- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.
- TBA

WEEK 16 – CONCLUDING THOUGHTS & TRAJECTORIES

Tuesday – 05/01: Concluding Activity: Networked Trajectories

Readings

- As needed: artifacts, fieldwork, etc.
- TBA

Due

- At least 2 fieldnotes + at least 1-2 memos.
 - TBA
-
-

Policies

Classroom Conduct

Original author: Dr. Sano-Franchini

All course participants are expected to be respectful of academic and personal differences that are present in this classroom and in our conversations, discussions, and interactions with one another. Anyone who exhibits disrespectful behavior will be asked to leave, and I will strongly recommend your removal from the course. In addition to a general standard of mutual respect in this classroom, all participants are asked to adhere to the following classroom policies:

Respectful and Empathic Listening

Effective dialogue hinges on our ability to listen with the goal of understanding and building connections—even if we disagree with what is being said. To work toward understanding, we will respect that each person's perspectives are valid, and that they come from a legitimate place. If we don't understand those perspectives, we will ask questions and avoid making silent judgements.

Personal Responsibility

We will use "I statements" (such as "I believe that...") rather than generalizing or provoking (but don't you think..?).

Collective Responsibility

We will speak for ourselves and not for others (including groups to which we belong). Likewise, we will respond to content rather than personalize comments that are made.

Mindfulness

We will be mindful of our personal impact on the group. Dominating discussions, interrupting others, arriving late, texting on your phone, checking social media, and eating or drinking noisily are examples of having a negative impact.

Confidentiality

Any sensitive information about individuals shared during class discussion remains in the classroom.

Ongoing Development

We will review our classroom protocol regularly to insure that we are meeting our expectations, and to determine if additional guidelines are needed.

VT Principles of Community

- ✓ Dignity & Value
- ✓ Civility & Sensibility
- ✓ Diversity & Difference
- ✓ Prejudice & Discrimination
- ✓ *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve)

Undergraduate Honor Code

The Undergraduate Honor Code pledge that each member of the university community agrees to abide by states:

As a Hokie, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.

Students enrolled in this course are responsible for abiding by the Honor Code. A student who has doubts about how the Honor Code applies to any assignment is responsible for obtaining specific guidance from the course instructor before submitting the assignment for evaluation. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the University community from the requirements and expectations of the Honor Code. For additional information about the Honor Code, please visit: <https://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/>.

Learner Support

Students should feel free to approach the instructor with concerns or questions about special needs or considerations that fall outside of the services listed here. All information shared will be kept confidential. For complete information on student services at Virginia Tech, please see the Division for Student Affairs.

- Emergencies - Dial 911. Subscribe to [campus alerts](#) Emergency Warning System
- Personal counseling, including help with drinking, drug abuse, mental health, stress, sexual assault recovery - Thomas E. Cook Counseling Center, 240 McComas Hall - dial (540) 231-7473 or [Cook Counseling Center](#)
- Reporting [sexual assault](#) - dial 911 or Student Health Care Center - dial 231-7642 or Women's Center at Price House - dial 231-7806
- Health care appointments - Schiffert Health Center - dial 231-7642 or [Health Care Website](#)
- Legal concerns - Student Legal Services - dial 231-4720 or [services website](#)
- Technical: I can not provide technical support. VT specific technology support can be directed to 4Help via the [Help Request Form](#) or by calling (540) 231-HELP (4357).
- Accommodations for Special Needs: Any student who has been confirmed by the University as having special needs for learning must notify me in the first week of the course. For more information please refer to [student services website](#).
- Academic Support Services: Any student requiring academic support should investigate the University's services. Service areas include: [Student Success Center](#), [Multicultural Academic Opportunities Program](#), [Student Athlete Academic Support Services](#), [University Academic Advising Center](#), and [Office of Veterans' Services](#). There are orientation services for new graduate students and for new or transfer undergraduate students. For tutoring, visit the Office of Academic Enrichment - 122 Hillcrest - dial 231-8887 or their website For career counseling, visit the Career Services, top floor Henderson Hall, - dial 231-6241 or refer to their [website](#). For study skills advice, visit [Thomas E. Cook Counseling Center](#), 240 McComas Hall - dial (540) 231-7473.
- The library has [extensive help services](#), including services and guides for those [using the library through the Internet](#). There are several methods to [contact a librarian](#).
- Accessibility: Students will be provided access to educational materials, buildings, library, computer and classroom opportunities. Videos will have closed captioning. All lecture videos have audio. It is uncertain if the textbook or reading material outside of the textbook is offered in a braille version or on audio. Visually-impaired students may request that the instructor describe the required figures verbally and the images used in the video

lectures. Students may request that their requirement to do the field delineation project, attend the field trip, and to lead WebEx sessions be waived, modified, or enabled. Review questions and exams may be presented in audio format upon request, and questions answered verbally by voice recording. More information about the university's [Accessibility policy](#).

- Disability: The university provides [services for students with disabilities](#). Students with disabilities and challenges should contact the university for course support.

Resources

Reading Strategies

Original tips created by Dr. Mars Hicks.

If you're having trouble keeping up with the reading for this class, here are some tips that may help you read faster and retain more:

1. Don't read in a decontextualized, content-driven fashion. Instead, read for argument: What is their argument? How do they support it? Who do they seem to be responding to and why?
2. Write it [the argument] down. Creative and well-organized note-taking is what enables you to join the discussion more confidently, because no one expects anyone to recall such details on the spot.
3. Figure out what details are important by seeing if they align, or conflict, with the scholar's argument.
4. Be able to formulate your own response to the scholar by using evidence from their text. You don't have to agree with their argument, but you should be able to point to specific parts of the text to show why you do or don't adhere to the author(s).
5. Again, take notice about how good note-taking is your best practice.
6. Jot down what your big takeaways were and consider what the author intended as such. This can help you see what you and the author have accomplished.
7. Reading dense material is a process, and you'll get better at it if you just commit and do the work. Our class discussions are part of the process, which will help you grasp what you read.
8. Lastly, if you don't get parts of a text, mark these places and questions. Again, write it down for taking it up in class. Good researchers organize their ideas to facilitate such discussion.

Note: These tips are also useful for reverse-engineering and dissecting successful writing, and for figuring out how to write your own papers.

Project Guidance: Technology Reports

To help you invent your own auto-ethnography project, I provide the following list of reports about contemporary issues surrounding digital technologies. Use them as a means to craft your own project.

Angwin, J., Tobin, A., and Varner, M. (2017, Nov. 21). Facebook (still) letting housing advertisers exclude users by race. Propublica [text/html]. Retrieved December 2, 2017, from <https://www.propublica.org/article/facebook-advertising-discrimination-housing-race-sex-national-origin>.

Biddle, S. (2017, Dec. 1). Twitter has literally no explanation for why Trump's Anti-Muslim Tweets are OK. The Intercept_. Retrieved 02 Dec. 2017 from <https://theintercept.com/2017/12/01/twitter-trump-anti-muslim-retweets/>.

Brandom, R. (2017, Dec. 29). Ad targeters are pulling data from your browser's password manager. *The Verge* [html/text]. Retrieved January 5, 2018, from <https://flipboard.com/@flipboard/-ad-targeters-are-pulling-data-from-your-f-1775c6c6f3%2Ftheverge.com>.

- Brown, K. V. (2018, Jan. 16). How DNA Testing Botched My Family's Heritage, and Probably Yours, Too. *Gizmodo* [html/text]. Retrieved January 17, 2018, from <https://gizmodo.com/how-dna-testing-botched-my-familys-heritage-and-probab-1820932637>.
- Chafkin, M. (2017, Aug. 7). Facebook and Google Algorithms Are the New 'Useful Idiots.' Bloomberg.Com. Retrieved 2 Dec. 2017 from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-08-07/facebook-and-google-algorithms-are-the-new-useful-idiots>.
- Collins, K. (2017, Nov. 27). Google collects Android users' locations even when location services are disabled [html/text]. Retrieved January 5, 2018, from <https://qz.com/1131515/google-collects-android-users-locations-even-when-location-services-are-disabled/>.
- Confessore, N. (2018, Jan. 27). The follower factory. *The New York Times*. Retrieved January 29, 2018 from <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/01/27/technology/social-media-bots.html>.
- Del Barco, M. (2017, Nov. 13). How Kodak's Shirley Cards Set Photography's Skin-Tone Standard. NPR.Org. Retrieved from 2 Dec. 2017 <https://www.npr.org/2014/11/13/363517842/for-decades-kodak-s-shirley-cards-set-photography-s-skin-tone-standard>.
- Ellenberg, J. (2017, Oct. 6). Opinion | How Computers Turned Gerrymandering Into a Science. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/06/opinion/sunday/computers-gerrymandering-wisconsin.html>.
- Falck, B. (2017, Oct. 24). New Transparency For Ads on Twitter [blog]. Retrieved January 5, 2018, from https://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/topics/product/2017/New-Transparency-For-Ads-on-Twitter.html.
- Gertz, M. (2018, Jan. 5). I've Studied the Trump-Fox Feedback Loop for Months. It's Crazier Than You Think. *Politico* [html/text]. Retrieved January 5, 2018, from <http://politi.co/2Av9v0f>.
- Glaser, A., & Glaser, A. (2017, Aug. 4). Facebook is using an "NRA approach" to defend its creepy facial recognition programs. *Slate*. Retrieved 2 Dec. 2017 from http://www.slate.com/blogs/future_tense/2017/08/04/facebook_is_fighting_biometric_facial_recognition_privacy_laws.html.
- Green, H. (2017, May 19). Election laws can't cope with data harvesting – which suits politicians fine [html/text]. Retrieved January 5, 2018, from <https://theconversation.com/amp/election-laws-cant-cope-with-data-harvesting-which-suits-politicians-fine-78044>.
- Joseph, G. (2017, Nov. 22). Extreme digital vetting of visitors to the U.S. moves forward under a new name. *Propublica* [Journalism]. Retrieved 2 Dec. 2017, from <https://www.propublica.org/article/extreme-digital-vetting-of-visitors-to-the-u-s-moves-forward-under-a-new-name>.
- Kao, J. (23 Nov. 2017). More than a million pro-repeal Net Neutrality comments were likely faked. *HackerNoon* [text/html]. Retrieved 2 Dec. 2017 from, <https://hackernoon.com/more-than-a-million-pro-repeal-net-neutrality-comments-were-likely-faked-e9f0e3ed36a6>.

- Knight, W. (2017, Dec. 13). Google's Return to China Foretells a Global Race to Deliver AI [html/text]. Retrieved January 5, 2018, from <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/609772/googles-return-to-china-foretells-a-global-race-to-deliver-ai/amp/>.
- Leora Smith and Kravitz, D. (2017, Dec. 8). Governors and federal agencies are blocking nearly 1,300 accounts on Facebook and Twitter [text/html]. ProPublica. Retrieved December 12, 2017, from <https://www.propublica.org/article/governors-and-federal-agencies-are-blocking-accounts-on-facebook-and-twitter>.
- Lomas, N. (28 Apr. 2017). Someone scraped 40,000 Tinder selfies to make a facial dataset for AI experiments [html/text]. TechCrunch. Retrieved December 12, 2017, from <http://social.techcrunch.com/2017/04/28/someone-scraped-40000-tinder-selfies-to-make-a-facial-dataset-for-ai-experiments/>.
- Lustgarten, A. (2012, June 21). Injection Wells: The Poison Beneath Us. *ProPublica* [news]. Retrieved January 11, 2018, from <https://www.propublica.org/article/injection-wells-the-poison-beneath-us>.
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- n/a. (n/a). Download your data [html/text]. *Google Takeout* Retrieved January 9, 2018, from <https://takeout.google.com/settings/takeout>.
- O'Beirne, J. (2017, Dec.). Google Maps's Moat. Justinobeirne.com [personal portfolio]. Retrieved January 6, 2018, from <https://www.justinobeirne.com/google-maps-moat>.
- Rogers, K. (2017, Nov. 16). Ignored By Big Telecom, Detroit's Marginalized Communities Are Building Their Own Internet. *Motherboard* [html/text]. Retrieved January 9, 2018, from https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/kz3xyz/detroit-mesh-network.
- Rosenberg, Y. (2017, Dec. 27). Confessions of a Digital Nazi Hunter [html/text]. Retrieved January 5, 2018, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/27/opinion/digital-nazi-hunter-trump.html>.
- Thorp, J. (13 Jul. 2017). You say data, I say system. HackerNoon [text/html]. Retrieved 2 Dec. 2017 from <https://hackernoon.com/you-say-data-i-say-system-54e84aa7a421>.
- Yglesias, M. (6 Nov. 2017). The real fix for gerrymandering is proportional representation. Vox [text/html]. Retrieved 2 Dec. 2017 from <https://www.vox.com/platform/amp/policy-and-politics/2017/10/11/16453512/gerrymandering-proportional-representation>.

Rhetoric & STS Journals

h/t Dr. Kelly Pender

- Argumentation and Advocacy
- Argumentation
- Technical Communication Quarterly

- Journal of Business and Technical Communication
- Written Communication
- Quarterly Journal of Speech
- Rhetoric Society Quarterly
- Rhetoric and Public Affairs
- Social Epistemology
- POROI
- Science Communication
- College Composition and Communication
- College English
- Rhetoric Review
- Philosophy and Rhetoric
- Western Journal of Communication
- Southern Communication Journal

STS and Content-Area Specific Journals

- Social Study of Science
- Science, Technology, and Human Values
- Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly
- Public Understanding of Science
- Science and Public Policy
- Environmental Science and Policy
- Environmental Communication
- Journal of Medical Humanities
- Policy Sciences
- Social Studies of Medicine
- BioSocieties
- Social Studies of Medicine

Special Issues on the Rhetoric of Science and Technology

- Configurations 11.2: ethos in science
- Discourse Studies 5.2: popularization of science in media
- Journal of Business and Technical Communication 15: Prospects for research in scientific and technical communication
- POROI 9.1: the future of RSTM scholarship
- Rhetorica 9.4: three articles on rhetoric of science
- Rhetorica 7.1: rhetoric of science in historical contexts

- Science, Technology, and Human Values 4.1: The field of RST
- Social Text 46/47: the “science wars”—a special issue that the text at the center of the Sokal hoax, as well as discussions of postmodern approaches to science
- The Southern Communication Journal 58.4: Gaonkar’s critique of RST and responses to it
- Technical Communication Quarterly 14.3: overview of RST and its importance
- Technical Communication Quarterly 12.3: visual rhetoric in science
- Written Communication 21.1: rhetoric of popular science